ARGUS



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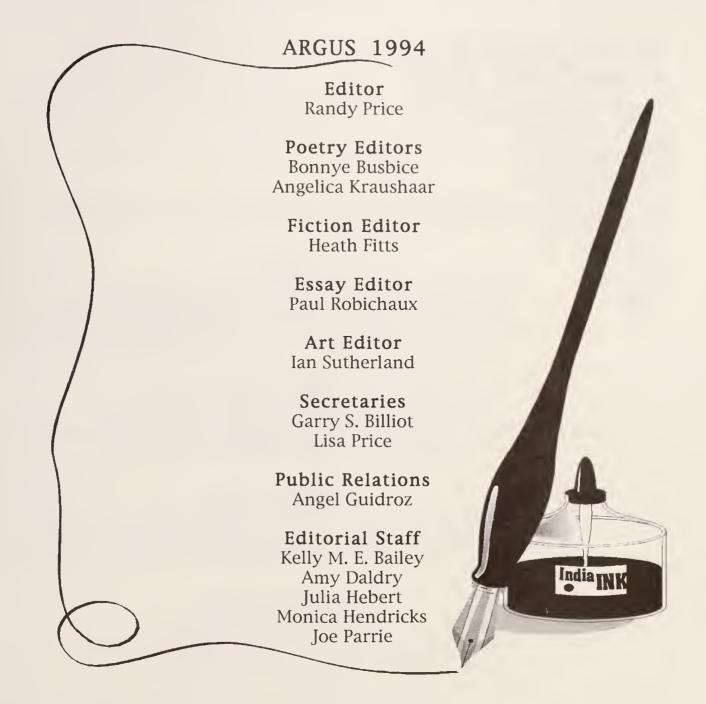
ARGUS 1994



The Literary Magazine of Northwestern State University Natchitoches, Louisiana



"Our Gang: The Staff of the 1994 ARGUS" photo by Jeff Fletcher



The ARGUS staff sincerely thanks Dr. Daryl Coats, Dr. Rocky Colavito, Dr. Karen Cole, Dr. Jean D'Amato, Mr. Clyde Downs, Dr. Christine Ford, Dr. Katherine Kearns, Dr. Craig Milliman, Dr. Bill Nelles, Dr. Helaine Ross, Dr. Fraser Snowden, Dr. Nate Therien, Dr. Ray Wallace, and Mr. Michael Yankowski for contributing their time in judging the Fall and Spring contests. We would also like to thank Mr. Louis Price, Mr. Tommy Whitehead, Mr. Edward Presutti, and Mr. Jeff Guin for providing technical assistance.



FALL 1993 CONTEST WINNERS:

Poetry

1st place: Marcy Frantom, "Saturday Off"
2nd place: Rae N. Cupples, "Two-Thirds of a Love Song"
3rd place: Phaedra Kelly, "America (with apologies to Ginsberg)"
Honorable Mention: Patty Fenton, "The Moment"

FICTION

1st place: John Doughty, Jr., "Blind-Tigers"2nd place: Carolyn Breedlove, "The Way Out"3rd place: Debra Bailey, "The Sacrifice"

Personal Essay

1st place: Robert P. Greer, "The Calm Before the Storm"
2nd place: M. Katherine Malinski, "J.A. Malinski & Sons'"
3rd place: Peter Ryles, "Limitations"

Scholarly Essay

1st place: Randy Price,

"White Lies: The Great Deception of European Colonization"

2nd place: Bonnye R. Busbice, "The Transfer of Power at Death in Dickinson's World: An Explication of 'I Rose--Because He Sank--"

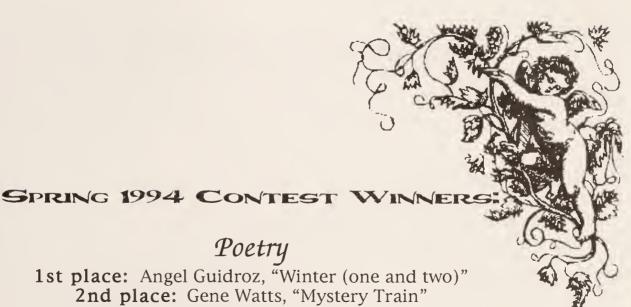
3rd place: Nathan Wood, "Poem 1130: A 'Transitive and Cool' Poem"

Honorable Mention: Robert P. Greer,

"Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan: From Serial to Film"

Art & Photography

1st place: David Alford, Jr., "Heart of Truth"
2nd place: Mark Kapera, "Watch the Dragon Burn"
3rd place (tie): Julia Hebert, "untitled"
Nathan Wood, "Gaunt Face"



Poetry

1st place: Angel Guidroz, "Winter (one and two)" 2nd place: Gene Watts, "Mystery Train" 3rd place: Cher M. Couvillion, "Frozen Weeds"

FICTION

1st place: John Doughty, Jr., "The Bear" 2nd place: Carolyn Breedlove, "Reunion" 3rd place (tie): Fred L. Taulbee, Jr., "The Last Tree (a children's story)" René Van Slate, "Wasps and Mustache Wax"

Essav

1st place: Robert Nehlig, "Dracula: noitanigamI nairotciV ehT" 2nd place: Rob Show, "Double Bindings" 3rd place: Lisa Price, "God and His Forces in This Present Darkness"

Art & Photography

1st place: Nathan Wood, "Masked" 2nd place: Courtney Bailey, "Scrutiny" 3rd place: Cher M. Couvillion, "How's Life?"



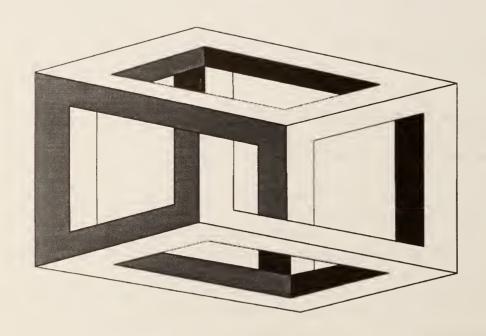
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by Suzanna Vazquez

recess with my best friend digging digging digging

indian-style beside the broke merry-go-round digging digging digging

you see those two pointy black roots those are the devil's horns and we're gonna dig him up

and just what are you going to do once you dig him up?

Kill him, of course my sunday school teacher says the devil is the worstest thing and he makes us bad so if we kill him everyone will be happy and good

you won't have to send carmen to the office no more and mommy and daddy won't fight no more and everyone will always have coke money

and on we go digging digging . . .

A Kindergarten World

by Debra Bailey

The freedom of smooth expression is a little girl moving round and round to scraping music from her Fisher-Price phonograph.
With limbs splayed out and fingers uncurled, with soft brown hair caressing baby soft arms, she performs.
Looking over stiff, stooped shoulders at long forgotten years, a mother unwinds busy, soapy hands for clapping.
Bowing, a little girl simply believes solo applause, and steps lightly out into her kindergarten world.

Monday Afternoon Longing

by Carol Bernard

just empty swing still rocking with the echo of movement, of legs tucking and reaching, of a young body screeching in delight as the world goes away, races back.

in the chains of the swing squeak in the sunset as it winds down its lonely pacing.
Silent and still in the fall day, it begs for play, for children to come and sit and sing and shout and to teach it once more to fly.





The Last Tree (A Children's Story)

by Fred L. Taulbee, Jr.

Once there was a farmer who needed firewood to cook and keep his family warm. Winter was coming soon, and he needed to find a tree for firewood. He rode to the forest, but all the trees had been cut down to build houses. He rode to the valley where the river ran, but all the trees had been cut down to make boats.

The only place left to search was in the hills, so he rode toward the hills. He found a giant oak tree with big leaves, long branches

and big roots that stuck out of the ground. All around the giant tree grew small seedlings.

The farmer raised his axe and started to swing.

"Wait," came a voice.

The farmer dropped his axe and looked around, but nobody was there.

"Who said that?" asked the farmer.

"I did," answered the tree.

"Trees can't talk," explained the farmer.

"Yes, we can," said the tree.

"Well, what do you want?" asked the farmer.

The tree asked, "why do you want to cut me down?"

"Because I need firewood to cook and keep my family warm," replied the farmer.

"But I am the last tree," cried the tree. "What will you do next year when there are no more trees?"

"I will have no firewood," answered the farmer. He looked around at all the seedlings around him and said, "Next year when these seedlings grow into saplings I will cut them down for firewood."

"They won't be big enough to use as firewood," explained the tree. "There wouldn't be enough of the saplings to last through the cold winter."

"What will I do?" asked the farmer. "May family will starve and freeze to death without firewood."

"Next year," said the tree, "when all the saplings have grown, you can cut me down."

"But what am I do to for firewood this winter?" asked the farmer.

The tree thought for a moment. Then it said, "Every time you need firewood, take down a section of your wooden fence and use it for firewood."

"But then all the animals will escape," said the farmer.

The tree thought again. Then it said, "Every time you take a part of your wooden fence down, build a stone wall to replace it."

"That is a good idea," he said. "But next year I will be back to cut you down." And the farmer left the last tree on the hill.

All during the freezing winter the farmer used his wooden fence for firewood. The other farmers saw what he was doing, and because they could not find any firewood either, they used their fences for firewood and replaced them with stone wails. During the winter all the farmers' families kept warm and ate plenty of warm meals.

When fall came again the farmer needed more firewood. He rode to the forest, but all he saw were seedlings. He rode to the valley where the river ran, but all he saw were more seedlings. He went to the hill where the last tree was standing.

When he got to the top of the hill he saw all the seedlings had grown into saplings. He walked to the tree and raised his axe over his head.

"Wait," said the tree.

"What?" asked the farmer.

"Why do you want to cut me down? I am the last tree that can bear seed," explained the tree. "If you cut me down, there will be no more seeds to make more trees."

The farmer set down his axe and said, "I need firewood to cook and keep my family warm."

"If you wait one more year," said the tree, "the saplings will start bearing seeds, and then you can cut me down."

"But what will I do for firewood this year?" asked the farmer.

The tree thought for a moment. Then it said, "You can use your wooden stable for fire-wood."

"Where will I keep my animals?" asked the farmer.

The tree thought again and said, "First, build a stable of bricks. Then use the wood from your old stable for firewood. Next year you can cut me down when the saplings start bearing acorns."

"I'll do it, but next year I'll be back to cut you down." And the farmer left the last tree on the hill.

All during the freezing winter the farmer used his wooden stable for firewood. The other farmers saw what he was doing, and because they could not find any firewood either, they built brick stables and used the wood from their old stables for firewood. During that winter all the farmers' families kept warm and ate plenty of warm meals.

When fall came again the farmer needed more firewood. He rode towards the forest, but there were not enough saplings to last through the winter. He went to the valley where the river ran, but the saplings there would not last through the winter either. He went to the hill where the tree was standing, and raised his axe over his head, but the tree did not say anything.

The farmer put the axe down and sat under the tree.

"What else can I use for firewood?" he asked the tree, but the tree did not answer him.

The farmer thought for a moment. "I can use the toolshed. I'll build a toolshed of bricks and use the wood from the old toolshed for firewood." And the farmer left the last tree on the hill.

Every fall the farmer would ride to the hill where the tree was standing. He would sit under the tree and think of other things to use for firewood instead of cutting down all the trees. And the tree is still there today, but it is no longer the last tree.



Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan: From Serial to Film by Robert P. Greer

Edgar Rice Burroughs is not a particularly well known author, but his literary creations have influenced the known world, particularly because of his creation of the character Tarzan of the Apes. Burroughs' second novel, <u>Tarzan of the Apes</u>, has proven to be by far his most popular work. Translated into thirty-three languages, Burroughs' Tarzan has become a classical mythic hero that has transcended written words and found its way into the genre of film. The reasons for this character's popularity are many, but the most important concern the classic nature of the Tarzan character and his universal appeal to not only 20th century America, but also the world. These important mythic qualities that Tarzan evokes can be attributed to the way the Tarzan has been treated in film and other mediums.

Burroughs' writing interests were encouraged by the Victorian realists like H. Rider Haggard and Rudyard Kipling along with some early science fiction authors like Jules Verne and Gregory Pope (Lupoff, Martian 92). Ray Bradbury ponders, "Was he a great thinker? He would have laughed at that. Was he a superb stylist? He would have snorted at that also" (xvii). Burroughs did not know anything about art in a specific, intentional sense. He stated repeatedly that his purposes for writing were to entertain and support himself. He saw himself only as a storyteller (Lupoff, Martian 23). Richard Kyle explains the sort of storytelling that Burroughs is famous for:

Every human season creates its story teller. When the world grows suddenly larger and the old myths shrivel and seem to wither away, he arrives somehow to tell his tale. If he is a great storyteller, his story tells all the things the people feel but can never say, not even to themselves. If he is merely good, he tells only part of the story they long to hear, and years may pass before another storyteller comes along to complete the tale. But great or good, he is always popular--for however disguised his story is, however fantastic it may seem, its true subject is the single one that interests all mankind, Reality [sic]. Edgar Rice Burroughs was a storyteller. . . . (110)

As a storyteller, Burroughs made his indelible mark upon popular culture. The art of telling stories is a rapidly dying folk tradition that appears to be less and less present in modern popular fiction. Burroughs' storytelling ability has carried over into the epic nature of Tarzan in film. The character qualities that Burroughs originated in his series, were carried on into the films through the efforts of many different scriptwriters and directors.

Burroughs' Tarzan is not typical of those characters created by other authors and film makers. Tarzan and his principal supporting characters follow a storybook mold of chivalry, compassion, physical mightiness, and almost uncanny

skills in fighting. One might think that the Tarzan character is not very realistic because of the unlikelihood that any one person could obtain these combined attributes, but these are the very traits and aspects of personality that most members of American society subconsciously strive to achieve. Tarzan is appealing because he has some aspect of personality that has not yet been realized in the life of a reader or film viewer. The Tarzan character remains powerful throughout its seventy years in film because of Tarzan's ability to make an audience strive to reach toward particular attributes that promote a classic heroic character.

Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan series is the most popular of his many works. The first novel, Tarzan of the Apes, was written in 1912 and sold to a newspaper as a part of a serial for the sum of four hundred dollars. Now the name Tarzan is known throughout the world. Both in Burroughs' novels and in film, Tarzan promotes a world where good and evil are static and unchanging. and where might does not always make right. This sense of immortality raises Tarzan above the mere restrictions of time or space (2 Farmer x). In most of the early Tarzan films, this maxim is also true. The first Tarzan film starred Elmo Lincoln and was shot in the early 1920's. Although the film was a silent picture. it bore one advantage that no succeeding Tarzan film could ever equal; Edgar Rice Burroughs was on the set and was consulted on how to make the film as accurate as possible. Titled Tarzan of the Apes and filmed in the swamps of New Orleans, Louisiana, it was to prove to be the mold of more than twenty Tarzan films that followed in the next seventy years. Although the acting in the film was something less than laudable, the screenplay followed Burroughs' Tarzan of the Apes to a great degree, giving the viewer a visual perspective into the actions depicted in the novel.

The accuracy of <u>Tarzan of the Apes</u> was not duplicated, or even remotely approached, until 1983 when <u>Greystoke</u>: <u>The Legend of Tarzan</u> was released. This film, directed by Hugh Hudson and starring Christopher Lambert in his screen debut, is as accurate as its film ancestor <u>Tarzan of the Apes</u>. It even surpasses the original by giving the audience a clearer vision of the harshness and bestiality of Tarzan's jungle heritage, while also establishing his ability and desire to learn, his adaptation to civilized society, and his code of morality and ethics. Meanwhile, between the first film and <u>Greystoke</u>, there emerged a variety of Tarzans. Most of the early Tarzan films following <u>Tarzan of the Apes</u> concentrated on the ignorant and savage characteristics of the ape man.

Almost all these films bore little resemblance to the original character that Burroughs created in his series. For example, in the 1938 film <u>Tarzan's Revenge</u>, Tarzan is characterized as a wild-eyed near-moron who is incapable of grasping anything other than the law of the jungle. It is in this film that Hollywood takes its first steps in shaping the "Me Tarzan, You Jane" image that is prevalent with

the idea of what Tarzan is to most modern audiences.

This perception of Tarzan's character is best illustrated by Richard Lupoff's interpretation of Tarzan as portraved in film:

Tarzan is an American who lives in a crude tree-house in an African jungle. His jungle-law mate, Jane Parker, is the daughter of an English trader. Their adoptive son Boy was so named in preference to Tarzan's suggestion of Elephant. Boy was found by Tarzan and Jane in the wreckage of an airplane. Conversation in the Tarzan menage is severely limited by the Ape Man's minuscule vocabulary and proportionately small intellect. (179)

The inaccuracy of this portrayal is realized by readers who know that Tarzan is an Englishman gentleman and member of the House of Lords. He owns a wealthy African plantation with his American wife Jane Porter. The couple were married soon after they met and conceived a son. Conversation among the Greystokes is quite complex and accented by Tarzan's fluent French, English, Swahili, and German among other languages (Lupoff, Master 180).

Many people do not consider Burroughs' Tarzan worthy of study because these critics base their prejudices on the Tarzan movies, which sometimes have little to do with the character that Burroughs created (Farmer, Mother ix). Film makers decided that the Tarzan of Burroughs' novels was too intelligent and reduced him to a being capable only of monosyllabic speech patterns, which stereotypically suggests ignorance. It seems from this action that film makers were supporting the antithesis of Burroughs' beliefs; the film Tarzan shows that uncivilized upbringing would result in little or no intelligence and an inability to function under acceptable societal conventions. This image is illustrated in the Gordon Scott and Johnny Weismuller Tarzan films shown from early 1950 to late 1960. In these films, Tarzan was to speak either in monosyllables or not at all.

In a standard format that all Tarzan films followed, the ape man swam through rivers, swung through jungles, and killed any man or beast that threatened either Jane or his animal friends. Tarzan encounters the dangers of the jungle along with experiencing tribulations among the most predatory beasts of all--man. This primitive code is what appealed to the Tarzan audience. Tarzan the character returns the viewer to a sort of Eden where, naked and without the oppressive nature of society, one fights evil and lives as a free man (Vidal 482). Tarzan films and novels explore the life man who is confronted with a seemingly insurmountable problem, has a climatic struggle, and finally achieves an acceptable solution to the problem (Meyer 39).

Different films exploited the different aspects of the Tarzan character. This exploration reveals that there are two main elements that are the embodiments of the Tarzan character. The most important aspect is that of romance and the implications of a romantic figure. Second are the realistic elements in the novel based on real animals, scenery, and a real man that could and did exist (Farmer xi). The Tarzan novels, and, therefore, the films are based on a real-life

feral man. There was a real "Lord Greystoke," and although that was not his actual title, he bears an uncanny resemblance to the Tarzan of Burroughs' novels and some films. The real life Lord Greystoke's parents were killed in the same manner as Tarzan's in the novel. Also raised by Apes, Greystoke recently recounted stories of what his real life was like in the jungle with apes (2 Farmer xi). Burroughs had heard a few stories of this man when he was growing up and had possibly even met the real Greystoke in person (Farmer 24). These stories, added to his knowledge of mythic heroes, were the catalysts that gave life to the character that the world knows as Tarzan.

The most infamous aspect of Burroughs' social commentary relates to his treatment of African-Americans in many of his novels. Some critics' condemn Burroughs because of their belief that Burroughs was making racial slurs against African-Americans when he wrote of the black tribe members that Tarzan encountered in Africa. The defense of these critics rests on the fact that in a modern novel or film, similar treatment of black Africans would receive poor reviews (Lupoff, Master 189). There has been much debate regarding Tarzan and the portrayal of black society, but there are factors that may alleviate some charges of racism levied against him.

This so-called racism is better understood when one considers the society's conventions in early twentieth century America. In many pulp magazines and the short two or four reel films of this period, the practice of caricaturing blacks, Jews, Irish, and other ethnic groups was very widespread. Authors who did use this type of stereotyping, however, were more likely lazy or ill-informed than actually maliciously attacking a race, religion, or lifestyle with vicious intentions (Lupoff, Master 189). This does not excuse them from their socially misguided ways, but one must remember that those who did stereotype were product-oriented and needed the monies from their story sales to survive on a daily basis.

In the early pulp magazines and films, there was little space or time available for writers to develop their stories. Most writers of this time found it difficult, if not impossible, to portray large groups of secondary characters in any way other than stereotyping a group as a whole. Lupoff summarizes such characterizations by writing that in Burroughs' era, each group had a preordained set of characteristics:

'Natives' of virtually any sort were treated as stupid but sly, superstitious, filthy, lustful, greedy, and so on for a long list of perjoratives. Similarly Jews were cheap, greedy, sly, treacherous; Irish were ruddy, jolly, stupid perhaps but good-natured and willing; English were noble, courageous, intelligent, in short paragons of virtue . . . unless they were of a certain element of the upper crust who were foppish, sissified, timid; and so on. (Master 190) Contrary to the accusations of constant racism in Tarzan novels and film, there

were many African natives treated as heroic protagonists. In the most illuminating instances, Tarzan interacts with the Wazari tribe. In both the novels and in film, Tarzan looked upon members of this tribe as brothers and equals who helped him enforce jungle law.

Tarzan, in both film and novels, dealt with a wide range of characters and personalities in his ninety-three novels. There is hardly any race or creed that remained unscathed. As Dr. Thomas S. Gardner said while on a panel discussing racial attitudes: "Burroughs had good Negroes and bad Negroes, good Jews and bad Jews, good Germans and bad Germans. He had good people and bad people of every kind in his books, because there are good and bad people of every kind" (Lupoff, Master 191). Burroughs and the film writers were simply following the writing customs of their time and showing people as they really are, both good and evil.

Burroughs' Tarzan has become a classical mythic hero that has transcended written words and found its way into many different genres. The reasons for this character's popularity are many, but the most important concern the classic nature of the Tarzan character and his universal appeal to not only 20th century America, but also the world. Burroughs played on society's need for a heroic character who possessed the redeemable qualities that Americans held as important.

Tarzan has enjoyed over seventy years of popularity that continues even today. The novel and film character embodies ideals that America holds dear even today which makes him a classical hero in his own right. Tarzan has become a part of our daily lives from the movies of Johnny Weismuller to modern popular songs like Tarzan Boy. One cannot deny that Burroughs has added a deeper meaning to the word adventure through his writing and his part in the creation of the film Tarzan.

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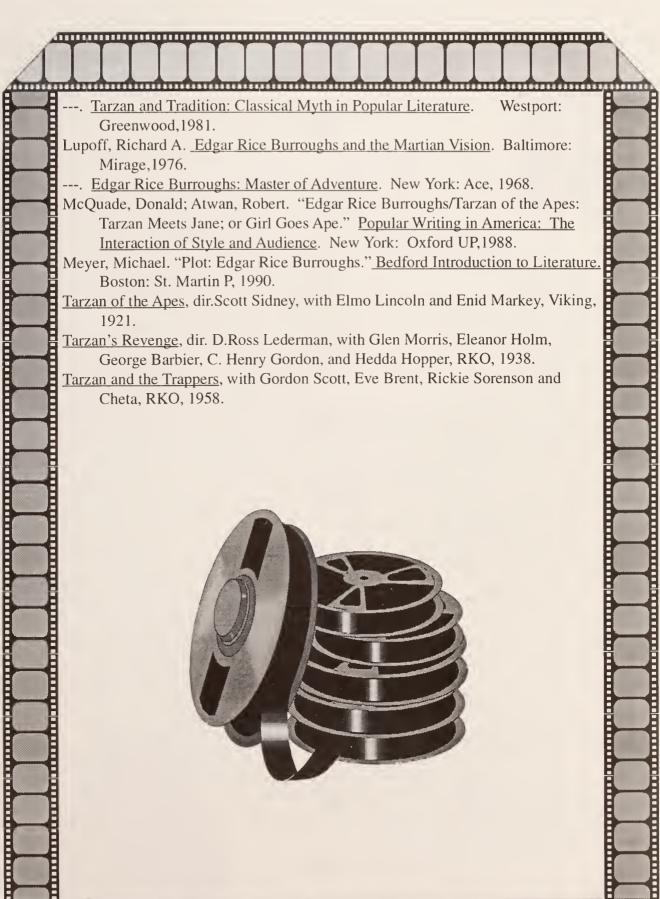
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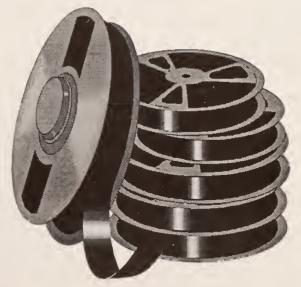
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A recipe for the next "Poet Laureate" by Stacey Leigh Taff

Amounts should vary with guest list, but should serve a class of 11.

2 cups topic 1 cup theme, peeled 1 cup voice 1/2 cup mood 1 tablespoon soul, washed 1 teaspoon belly 1/2 teaspoon earth 1/4 teaspoon cherrywood, chopped dash of the almighty 1 ounce of phallus, diced 1/2 teaspoon foreign allure, grated 1 tablespoon womyn 1 teaspoon homogeneous extract 1/8 teaspoon anonomis pinch of rhyme and meter dash of illiteration 1/4 teaspoon metaphor

Mix topic, theme, and voice, adding mood until mixture comes to a rolling boil. Stir frequently. Next, in a separate bowl, blend soul, belly, earth, cherrywood, and gradually fold in the almighty. Add to the boiling mixture. Remove from heat and stir in womyn, homogeneous extract and anonomis. Pour mixture into a pan of meaningful but obscure words. Sprinkle with a pinch of rhyme and meter, a dash of illiteration, and a bit of metaphor. Place pan on dusty bookshelf and wait. Time may vary from 5 minutes to 200 years, or until done. Remove pan and cool. Cut into pieces with a Sweeney knife. Serve to hungry poets (and punctuate with a fart).

Reminiscing

by Garry S. Billiot

i had a true friend whom i knew since i was little he was a grey fluff ball

he knew of my first sexual encounter and my ambitions to be a psychiatrist he sat with attentive ears

whenever i was depressed i d call him and he d answer and listen

we both liked ice cream and we always played together he would follow me everywhere including the bathroom

one night as he lay asleep next to me he stirred and mewled faintly

the next day
i awoke to find
that my special friend had gone

i miss my cat

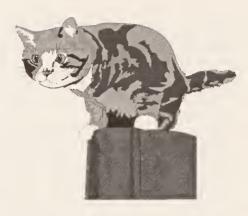












Nuisance by Laura Rose

There's fur on my pillow, Claw marks on the couch. How dare you do this To my beautiful house?

My puzzle's back in pieces. The knitting's all undone. Have you no concern Or respect for anyone?

Don't just sit there blinking! Stop that purring right away! I'm trying to be angry. I do not want to play.

What! What is this? Are you climbing in my lap? I guess you think I'll sit here 'Til you finish your nap!

Well, maybe just a little while. You do feel soft and warm. After all, if you're sleeping, You can't do any harm!

I realize you are playful. You can't help that, I guess. I just wish you knew How to clean up your mess.

There you go a-purring In that disarming way. You may be a nuisance, But I love you anyway.







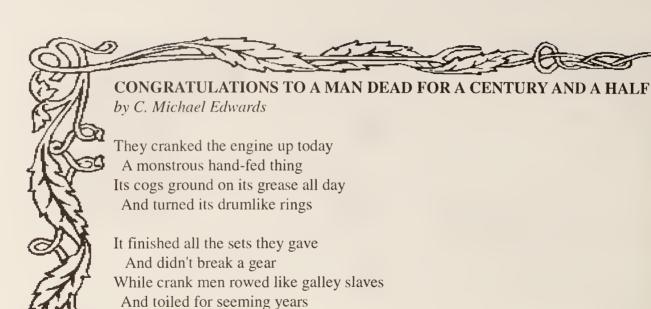












Its shafts kept turning round and round While people watched the wheels To see if it would litter ground With shattered brass and steel

As tensions built, a historian
Climbed the frame to see
The crowd stepped back, no one quite fain
To watch the creature feed

When all uneaten he stepped down
They all expected worst
But he told them all what one had known
"I'll be damned - It works."



Pooh

by Laura Rose

His woolly fur is matted and worn. His smile is faded; his ear is torn. His rusty music box won't play. Mama says I should throw him away.

But I remember nights in my bed, When I cried with covers over my head. He snuggled close and dried my tears, Kept me warm and calmed my fears.

I don't care if he's falling apart. I still love him with all my heart. So what if his music box won't play? I'll never ever throw him away!

The Bear

by John Doughty, Jr.

The gravel road to Lincecum Bayou Lake ran right past our front porch--gave us plenty of dust--and we looked up one day and yonder came a beat-up four-door Chevy with an aluminum boat crammed in the trunk, bottom up.

"Johnny Ray," my momma asked me, "who's that gal a-waving at you from the back seat?" "She's one of them Carnahans from Thicket Ridge," I said.

Momma quit shelling peas. "Johnny Ray Lincecum, that gal's white trash. You keep yore skinny hide away from Thicket Ridge."

We weren't white trash. My great-grandpappy owned the land where the lake is now. He lost it in the Great Depression, and they dammed up the bayou and made a lake, and as far as we Lincecums were concerned, it belonged to us. If somebody didn't catch any fish, we had a deep-freeze filled with catfish fillets in milk jugs and they were five dollars a gallon.

I had a live-box down under a cypress tree out in the lake, and if them city-slickers didn't catch anything with their twenty thousand dollar bass boats, I'd sell them something they could hang on their wall for three dollars a pound. Had eight hundred dollars hid in a fruit jar under the junk in the barn.

"Yes, ma'am," I told Momma and gave that gal the biggest grin I could muster.

The car went down that rutted gravel road and the trunk lid bounced up and down and clang! -clang! -clang! -pow! -banged against the bottom of the boat until it crossed over Lincecum Ridge, headed for the lake. We went back to shelling peas and throwing hulls in a pile on the floor. Out by the front gate, three or four hungry hogs stared through the fence, waiting on the pile.

My sisters, Suzie Mae--she was sixteen, a year younger than me-- and Minnie Mae--she was fifteen--sat in the chairs on the other side of Momma. They had dish pans heaped with purple-hull peas in their laps and two city boys from over in Jena sitting on the edge of the porch, staring at their bosoms and trying to look up their dresses without Momma knowing. But Momma knew what those boys wanted, I figured, and I knew for sure. If I could get everybody off the porch but the city boys, I planned on showing them the crack in the wall and after dark, charging them five dollars for a peek.

"Yonder comes cousin Hoss and cousin Jessie Bill," Momma said, looking up over the peas in her lap. "Johnny Ray, if they catch a bunch of catfish in their traps, go help clean 'em; they'll give us a mess for supper.

They gave us a wave when they went by. Hoss's real name was Jimmy Bill but it sounded too much like Jessie Bill, and every time you'd holler for one, the other one would come. So everybody called him "Hoss." He was driving, as usual. Jessie Bill was drunk, as usual.

They had an old Ford pick-up with a camper shell on back, and they'd painted the whole thing house-paint-blue with a brush. I'd put Hoss a tape-player in the dash, and even though he wasn't but about ten years old when Hank WIlliams died, he'd been grieving ever since and that was all he ever played--full volume. It'd blowed out the speakers and gave ole Hank's voice even more twang than it already had. Kicking up dust and bouncing, waving, and twanging, "Yore cheating heart will pine someday...", they crossed the ridge, headed for the lake.

They never went anywhere without a sack of fried chicken or catfish, and they threw the bones in the floorboards of the house-paint-Ford. Momma's old yellow dog jumped off the porch, slid through a hole in the fence, and trotted after them. He disappeared in the dust, headed for a bone.

We went back to shelling peas, and the city boys went back to grinning and gawking up dresses.

About a dozen gawks and a bushel later, Momma said, "Yonder comes the mailman."

Now that was unusual. The mailboxes were out by the black-topped road. Somebody, we all figured, had important news, and we wondered who it was and hoped it was us and meant money. The mailman had a little white car, and he stopped it out by the gate and the hogs, waited for the dust to settle, and got out. "I'm looking for Jimmy Bill and Jessie Bill Lincecum," he said in his best government-man impression. "Got a letter they got to sign for."

Who in the world would send them a certified letter, I wondered. They bought beer and chicken with cash so it couldn't've been a hot check, and they didn't owe anybody money because nobody in his right mind would give them credit.

"Who's it from?" Momma asked, trying to look like she didn't really care.

"Can't say," he said, trying to look important.

"They're down at the landing," I told him. "Should be off the lake by now."

He left in a cloud of dust, headed for the landing, and we went back to shelling peas and gawking and wondering and waiting, knowing Hoss and Jessie Bill couldn't read. A few minutes later, the mailman drove by, not waving and not letting Lincecums or dust delay the completion of his appointed rounds. The yellow dog trotted up, growled at the hogs, crawled through the fence, and lay down in the yard licking his chops. Finally, up drove Hoss and Jessie Bill.

They parked the house-paint-Ford, sat their beer cans on the dash so as not to offend Momma--she had the Holy Ghost--and got out. Jessie Bill was way too thin, and nearly every chance Momma got she tried to feed him some peas and cornbread. He came through the gate, looking like a staggering scarecrow. Hoss followed, kicked a squealing shoat out of the way, and they stopped at the edge of the porch, and , "Howdy," he said.

That was my hog Hoss had kicked, and I didn't like it but wasn't much I could do about it; he was a big man. Biggest Lincecum ever, far as I knew. Mean, too; loved fighting more than drinking beer.

His belly looked like my sisters' would in nine months if the city boys got what they wanted, and the overalls he lived in were cut off at the knees. He was naked except for the overalls, and his face and the rest of him sprouted hair, and an ugly red scar ran from one of his shoulders and down his arm where Jessie Bill had worked him over with a knife and Momma'd sewed it up with a needle and thread. Him and Jessie Bill'd got in a fight over a soft-shelled turtle they caught in a net. One of them wanted to eat it, and the other one wanted to sell it. I don't know which was which, but Jessie Bill won.

Hoss stood there waiting for Momma to speak, his hairy legs poking out the bottom of the cut off overalls, a white envelope sticking out of the pocket of the greasy bib, and Jessie Bill swaying beside him. Hoss took a bath only when it rained while he was out in the lake and that hadn't happened in a while. Jessie Bill's breath could wither the bitter-weeds in the yard.

"Howdy," Momma finally said, nose wrinkled, fingers still shelling. "Catch a bunch of catfish?"

"Yep," Hoss told her, and his whiskered face took on a sudden, solemn, government appearance. "We," he stated, "got a telegram."

"Lord have mercy!" echoed around the porch, and everybody looked back and forth at each other in amazement.

"No, Hoss," I said, "it's a certified letter."

"Nope," he informed me, "it's a telegram."

"Don't sass your cousin," Momma ordered. "he knows a telegram when he sees one; besides, it probably means money."

Jessie Bill exhaled, filling the air with a smell like month-old beer. "Yep, it's a telegram; money for shore. Mailman said it was from Columbus, Mississippi."

I decided not to argue; besides, it might really mean money because the only person we knew in Mississippi was Uncle Larry Joe Lincecum, and he was rich, owned a circus.

"Where's Columbus, Mississippi?" Hoss asked.

Everybody looked at me. "About three hundred miles from here," I told them.

"Y'all's Uncle Larry Joe lives there," Momma said. "He's rich; owns a circus."

"Want me to read the telegram?" I asked Hoss, trying my best not to sound anxious.

"Well, left my glasses at home, so go ahead."

He pulled the certified letter from the greasy bib, handed it to me, and I glanced at the return address. "It's from a lawyer."

Jessie Bill eyed his suddenly worried brother. "Uncle Larry Joe ain't suing us; is he, Hoss?" "Y'all owe him any money?" Momma asked.

"Nope," Hoss said, "can't be that. He wouldn't loan us any."

I opened the letter and started reading it aloud:

Dear Misters Jimmy Bill and Jessie Bill Lincecum:

It is my sad duty to inform you of the death of your beloved uncle, Larry Joe Lincecum.

As executor of his estate, it is my official duty to also inform you that he left a last will and testament on file in my office and named you both as sole heirs of all his worldly possessions----

"Woo-ee!" Hoss and Jessie Bill shouted and started dancing a jig in the front yard. "We're rich! We're rich! Thank you Lord! Thank you Lord!"

The faces of everybody on the porch fell, including the city boys' and mine. I'd never laid eyes on Larry Joe lincecum that I could remember, but, by golly, he was my uncle, too. I looked down at the letter. "Wait!" I said. "There's more!"

However, as executor of your uncle's estate, I must inform you that it consists only of a trained bear which he wrestled at lounges and sideshows. I urgently request your immediate attention to this matter and that you claim your inheritance as soon as humanly possible.

"It's signed," I said, "William W. Williams the Third, Attorney-at-Law." Nobody said anything. Jessie Bill finally asked his brother, "Hoss, we ain't rich?"

"Nah," he said, face down, looking toward his belly.

I handed him the letter, and they went out the gate, paupers again.

"Y'all need help cleaning them catfish?" Momma asked.

Hearts broke, having gone from poor to rich and back again in thirty seconds, they said nothing. I jumped off the porch and ran and climbed in the back of the house-paint-Ford. Hank twanging, "Did you hear that lonesome whip-pore-Will? He sounds too blue to fly," from the front and catfish squirming, croaking, and trying to breath air in five-gallon buckets around me in the back, we bounced up the gravel road and stopped at their house.

We dumped the buckets in a wheelbarrow, and Hoss rolled it in the yard, fighting off hogs. Over on their kitchen table permanently stuck in a corner of the yard near the water hose and hogs, we started cleaning catfish. Jessie Bill pinched off fins so they wouldn't kill the hogs and skinned the fish with pliers. Hoss chopped off heads, pulled out guts, and pitched them over the fence. I sliced off fillets and dropped them in a pan of ice. "Hoss," I asked, watching a catfish head gasp for air with no place to put it, "y'all gonna go get that bear?"

Hoss threw the gasping head over the fence and started a squealing fight. "Nah," he said, "what we gonna do with a bear? I don't like bears."

"Hoss, you ever wrestled a bear?"

He didn't answer for a second and looked like he suddenly got mad. "Yep," he finally said, "in a bar over in Tullos. Damn that bear stunk!"

I wondered how he could tell. "What'd it cost to wrestle that bear?" I asked, wondering about something else.

"Ten dollars," he told me and sliced off another head.

"That bear whupped his ass," Jessie Bill informed me through a gulp of beer, "an' ain't no man ever done it!"

"Shore did," Hoss admitted with a mean look in his eye. "One good swipe with that paw and he knocked me slap out of the ring. If I'd lasted ten minutes, I'd've won a hundred dollars."

"Anybody beat that bear?"

"Nope," they both agreed, "nobody even come close."

"How many tried?"

"Well, let's see now," Hoss thought out loud. "There was them Thompson twins from over on Possum Point . . . them three Haily boys from Jena, and ---"

"All four of them Murphrey boys from Ferriday," Jessie Bill interrupted, "and the Jackson cousins from Tullos, and . . ."

They talked and I counted. After they finished, opened another beer and started cleaning catfish again, I said, "Hoss, that bear whipped fifteen men at ten dollars each."

"Yep," he said, "shore did."

I waited, hoping my meaning would soak into their heads. It didn't. "Hoss," I finally said, "that bear made whoever owned it a hundred and fifty dollars for one night's work, and he didn't do the work; the bear did."

"Yep," he said again, "shore did."

I thought I would have to spell it out, but he drew back his hand, ready to throw, and then stopped, the gasping head suspended beside his. "Hey," he said, his mouth looking like it was moving with the fish's, "we don't make that much in a week on catfish and hogs."

"Yep," I then said, "and y'all do all the work."

Hoss threw the head. "Johnny ray, you got a driver's license?"

"Yep," I said, "shore do."

"Jessie Bill," Hoss said, "we rich."

We left before daylight the next morning, me driving, Jessie Bill in the middle, and Hoss-thank you Lord--on the other side. They'd stuffed fried chicken and catfish in a pillow case--it was nearly clean--and put it on top of the junk on the dash. The truck didn't have a rear window, and as we drove away, Jessie Bill reached back, pulled two beers from an ice chest next to the cab, popped the top on one, and handed the other one to Hoss. Jessie Bill drank; Hoss sipped, and that's how we left Louisiana: them drinking beer and all of us eating fish and chicken and throwing cans and bones in the floorboards and listening to ole Hank twang.

Somewhere in Mississippi we stopped for gas and a case of beer and a road map. About

noon, I parked the truck in front of a glass and concrete building and we got out and walked inside. It was swanky as a whorehouse, but I'd only been in one and it really wasn't swanky at all. But this place was. It had trees and bushes growing inside it, big soft chairs that looked like nobody ever sat in them, and more lights on one wall than we had in our whole house. Hoss and Jessie Bill didn't even look around; they headed straight for a big brown desk and a blonde-haired lady with a bosom like my Momma's and sisters'.

Her mouth dropped lower. "Yes, yes, may I . . . may I help you?"

"Yep. We heirs. This here's my brother, Jessie Bill Lincecum. We come to git our bear."

"B-b-bear?"

"Yep. Bear," Hoss said.

"Yep. Bear," Jessie Bill agreed and belched.

Her face started turning green. I took the certified letter out of Hoss's bib and handed it to her. "We need to see Mister William W. Williams the Third."

She glanced at the letter. "P-please," she said, "have a seat . . . over there."

She handed the letter back, pointed to a couch way on the other side of the room, and we walked to it and sat down. She picked up her telephone.

"Hoss," Jessie Bill asked, "when we git rich, can we by us a couch like this?"

"Yep," Hoss answered, "and we might git an office, a telephone, and a purty gal like that to answer it."

The lady whispered something in the phone, hung it up, and sat there like she was waiting on somebody to have a baby. Her eyes moved back and forth from us to a fancy wood door. In a minute, it opened, and out stepped a fellow that had to be William W. Williams the Third.

We could have sold all our hogs and the fish in our freezer and still not have enough money to buy his suit and shoes. He had slicked-back gray hair and a smile on his face like a pennycost preacher. But his face changed because all of a sudden he looked at us like we were ghosts. He walked to us, mouth open, and stuck out his hand. "I'm . . . I'm Bill Williams," he said.

We got up and shook his hand; it felt like a catfish.

"Pleased to meet you," Hoss said, belly way out, cut off overalls pulled above his knees. 'I'm Jimmy Bill Lincecum, and this her's Jessie Bill Lincecum. We come to git our bear."

William W. Williams the Third's nose suddenly crinkled like he'd smelled something that'd been dead for a while. He backed away from Hoss, turned, and walked real fast to the blond-haired lady's desk. "Miss Jones! The Lincecum file!"

She fumbled through a cabinet behind her, finally found a manila folder, and took it out. The folder dropped, papers scattered everywhere, and William W. Williams the Third eyed the front door, hoping, I figured, nobody'd come in. The lady found a paper, put it on her desk, and, "Here," she mumbled. "Sign here."

"They can't write," I told her.

"We got a mark," Hoss told her.

"Mark it!" William W. Williams the Third told them.

They did, and me and the lady witnessed it. You couldn't read her signature because her hand shook so bad, but I signed my name in big letters, giving the *J* in *Johnny* a fancy loop.

"Where's our bear?" Hoss asked.

"At the veterinarian," William W. Williams the Third said. "They're boarding her. There's a bill . . ."

"Ain't got no money," Hoss lied and patted the bib of his overalls. "This here letter didn't say nothin' about paying. When you an heir, you don't pay; you git!"

The front door opened, and in walked a lady with silver hair, gold rings, and diamonds

hanging everywhere. William W. Williams the Third looked at her, then at us. "I'll pay it! Miss Jones! Call the veterinarian!"

She did, and he told me how to get to the vet's office. We left, and I glanced back, and she had her blond head down on the big brown desk and William W. Williams the Third and the silver-haired lady was sitting on the edge of it, staring after us as we walked out the door.

I found the office, and the vet took us in the back. There sat the bear in a cage. "She was in bad shape," the vet said.

My dreams of a sack of money went out the window in a bag of bones. That bear was skinnier than any of our hogs, ate up with the mange, and had almost no hair at all. Where she had rubbed and scratched at the mange, she was covered with sores. She looked at me with them big eyes and I forgot about money and never felt so sorry for anything as I did for that bear.

"She had worms," the vet said, "and the worse case of mange I've ever treated. But," he added, "with time and proper care, she'll recover."

I had tears in my eyes and a lump in my throat.

"Would you like to let her out?" the vet asked. "She's very tame."

Hoss and Jessie Bill eased back, and the vet opened the door. The bear stepped out, licked my hand, and rubbed her mangy side against my leg. "Here's her muzzle," the vet said, "don't wrestle her for a long time--let her recover--and don't wrestle her without it." His face turned angry. "She has no teeth, or claws either, but her jaws could break someone's arm."

"Why don't she have teeth?" I asked. "Is she old?"

"No, she's only about four years old. She doesn't have any teeth because your uncle had them removed, along with her claws."

The woods around Lincecum Ridge had a few bears, and I knew they had to have claws to dig grubs out of the ground and rotten logs. If Uncle Larry Joe Lincecum had been alive, I would have whispered in Hoss's ear that Uncle Larry Joe said he stunk.

"Will it hurt to wrestle her?" I asked. "I mean . . . after she's well."

"No, not at all. When she recovers her strength, she'll probably enjoy it. Here's her leash." He fastened the collar around the bear's neck and handed me the end of the chain. "She'll follow you around like a dog."

I led her outside, and she followed more like a huge puppy than a dog. Hoss lowered the tail-gate on his house-paint-Ford and the bear jumped inside. "Please," the vet told me, "take care of her."

"Mister," I answered, meaning every word, "she's gonna be treated better than most of the people on Lincecum Ridge."

We hadn't hardly got out of the parking lot when the bear poked her head through the rear window and licked my ear and grunted. I got a fried catfish out of the pillow case and stuck it in her mouth. She swallowed it whole.

And that's the way we went through Mississippi. The bear had her head stuck between mine and Jessie Bill's, watching through the windshield at where we went instead of looking out the back at where we'd been. I fed her every catfish and piece of chicken in the pillow-case, and I made Jessie Bill pick up the bones on the floorboards and give them to her. She crunched them with her gums and ate the floorboards clean except for cans. When she needed a drink, she raised the lid on the ice-chest with her nose. Hoss and Jessie Bill drank beer and counted and spent money they hadn't made yet.

"We gonna be rich," they both agreed.

"Gonna get me a crew-cab-Ford with four-wheel-drive and ever song Hank ever sung," Hoss said.

We whizzed through Natchez as the sun got low, crossed the bridge, and stopped in Vidalia for gas, beer, and chicken--twenty gallons, three cases, and two buckets.

About an hour later, we zoomed down the black-topped road, turned at the mailboxes, and stopped at Hoss and Jessie Bill's house. Momma was smiling from the porch, and my sisters were in the swing, swinging high. The city boys sat on the floor, getting a real good gawk.

I got out; Hoss got out; Jessie Bill fell out in a clatter of cans. I ran around the back of the house-paint-Ford and let out the bear.

Some hogs walked up, took one look and a sniff and headed for the woods squealing. The city boys had quit gawking and had their noses in the air. "That," one of them said, losing all chances of a peek through the crack, "is the sorriest looking animal I've ever seen."

Hoss opened the gate, and I led the bear into the yard. We left Jessie Bill; sleeping in beer cans and gravel.

"Johnny Ray," Momma said, "that bear ain't gonna live. You ought to shoot it and put it out of it's misery."

"No, Momma," I told her, "I'll take care of it."

She looked at me for a long time. "Okay," she said, "I'll go fix it some medicine."

She left, stepping fast, and my sisters followed her, the city boys behind them with their city hands on my sisters' country behinds. I figured I was gonna be an uncle for sure.

Hoss went inside, plopped down in a chair, and started snoring. I led the bear inside, kicked a path through the beer cans and empty fried chicken boxes, and headed for the kitchen with the bear, aiming to find her something to eat. She found it herself; fish and chicken bones were everywhere.

The bear crunched bones, and a few minutes later the screen door opened and there stood one of the city boys, his eyes wide in amazement at the trash, and a gallon milk jug black with Momma's medicine in his hand. I took it form him and said, more than half-way meaning it: "If my sister gets pregnant, I'm gonna feed you to that bear."

He left, and I found a rag, soused it in the used motor-oil and sulfur, and started doctoring the bear's skin while she nosed through the trash. She finally got full and stretched out on the couch, adding a little more grease to what was already there. I heard a car on the gravel road, looked out the door and saw the lights of the city boys' car, heading for the city. Maybe I figured, I wasn't going to be an uncle after all.

I dug through a closet, found a sheet that didn't stink, wrapped it around me against the mosquitoes, and went to sleep in the porch-swing. In the middle of the night, I heard Hoss yell, "Hey, bear! Git yore ass off my couch!"

The bear whimpered, and then she growled and I heard her shuffling trash, making a bed. Hoss had kicked her off the couch. I wished she had teeth.

Just as the sun came up, the bear licked me in the ear. "Good morning, bear," I said and scratched her ears. She lay her head on my belly like the biggest dog you ever saw.

I slept in the swing for a week, doctoring the bear three or four times a day and feeding her anything I could find. I helped clean catfish every afternoon, and I'd make sure the bear got just as much head and guts as the hogs. Every chance I got, I slipped her a fillet. Every chance Hoss got, he'd kick her.

By the end of the week, people would stop and get out of their cars and trucks and hang over the fence, watching the bear crunch catfish heads with her gums. She got stronger, and we started wrestling. I'd put a hammer-lock around her neck, and she'd shake me off like I was a baby. It never crossed my mind to put the muzzle on her. Hoss never stopped kicking her.

After a month, along about the end of summer, the bear had gained weight and started grow-

ing hair. And we got a bigger audience. People would back pick-up trucks up to the fence, sit on the tail-gates, and watch the bear crunch catfish heads and wrestle with me. Hoss and Jessie Bill sold all their fillets without having to freeze them in jugs, and everybody gave them beer. So I guess they were rich after all. But Hoss hated the bear for some reason I couldn't understand.

At the end of summer, right before school started, I found out why.

The Thompson twins were in the back of a pick-up, drinking beer. "Say, Hoss," one of them asked, "didn't I see a bear whip yore ass in a bar in Tullos?"

Hoss had a catfish head in his right hand, and he threw it and it thudded hard against the side of a hog. He had a glare in his eyes I'd never seen before. "yep," he said, "and right after that I whipped yores, then yore brother's, and I gave y'all fifteen minutes to rest and whipped you both together. Wanna try it again?"

"Nope," they both said real fast, and the mouthy one added, "Must be kinda hard on a fellow to know he can whip just about anybody and can't whip a bear."

Hoss's fists clenched, and the blood and guts of the head-less catfish in his left hand squirted from between his fingers. He threw the dripping mess to the hogs. "Johnny Ray," he said, "put the muzzle on the bear."

With tears in my eyes, I got the muzzle and did as Hoss ordered. "Please, bear," I whispered in her ear, "let Hoss win."

But the bear turned, knowing the meaning of the muzzle, and Hoss walked up and pushed me away. Then he kicked her in the side. She roared with pain and charged, but so did Hoss, and they met with a crash, rolling over in the dirt, the bear trying to bite and tear at Hoss through the muzzle, and Hoss trying to get his arm around her neck and throw her.

Then Hoss jumped up, and they glared at each other, both breathing hard. Suddenly, the bear stood on her hand legs, shook her head back and forth trying to shake off the muzzle, and let out an ear-splitting roar. They charged again.

Hoss's shoulder hit the bear in the chest, and she teetered backward and swung her paw. Hoss flew through the air, hit the fence and fell. We thought the match was over, but it turned into a fight. Hoss shook his head, jumped up, and came back swinging his fists.

Again and again he pounded blows into the bear's chest. She roared, in pain now, and a paw flashed with lightning speed and smashed into the side of Hoss's head. He hit the fence again, broke a post, and fell limp as a dead snake on the sagging wire.

The bear, wanting to tear Hoss to pieces, prepared to charge, but I leaped between them and begging, pleading, calmed her down. Hoss groaned and rolled off the wire.

Rubbing the bear's trembling sides, I glared at the people in the trucks and gathered at the fence. "Get out," I ordered, "and don't come back."

They left, and Hoss crawled inside the house. Scared more than I'd ever been in my life, I waited in the yard with the bear and listened through the screen door at Hoss cussing and chugging down beer and throwing the cans against the wall. Jessie Bill stood at the catfish-cleaning table, drinking beer and staying out of the way.

"Johnny Ray," he told me real low, "Hoss is gonna kill that bear."

"No, he ain't," I said, braver than I really felt.

I found a broke axe-handle in the junk in the yard, laid it beside me on the porch, and shaking with fear, hugged the bear and waited. Lord, I wished she had teeth and claws.

A can hit the wall, and Hoss started kicking trash. I let go of the bear and put both hands on the axe-handle.

The screen door crashed open, slammed shut, and there stood Hoss, swaying worse than Jessie Bill and holding a double-barreled shotgun. "Don't!" I screamed, and he raised the gun.

I jumped up and smashed my shoulder into his belly. He fell back against the screen door, and "BLAM!" the shotgun fired and blew a hole in the roof of the porch. The bear jumped the sagging fence and took off for the woods like a scared rabbit.

I swung the axe-handle with all my might, but the back of Hoss's hand walloped me across the nose and I hit the floor, bleeding. The shotgun raised but I couldn't move and "BLAM!" it fired again. The bear yelped with pain and jumped the gravel road. I could hear it out in the bushes, crying something awful. Then it ran, and the pitiful cries faded.

Hoss stood there swaying, the shotgun in the crook of his arm and a satisfied grin across his drunken face. I got up, behind him, and swung the axe-handle again.

"CR-RACK!" it broke across the back of his head and he hit the floor like a brain-shot hog. I hoped it had killed him, but it didn't. I could hear him moaning.

I ran for the woods, yelling, "Bear! Bear! Come back!"

I searched all night, yelling and stopping every once in a while to wipe my eyes. But I didn't find the bear, and I never went back to Hoss and Jessie Bill's. For a long time, they'd pass our house on the gravel road and not even wave.

Fall came, school started, my last year, and I searched for the bear every evening. Finally, I gave her up for dead.

One day, the summer I graduated, I headed through the woods for Thicket Ridge. It's two miles from our place to the Carnahan's, but by then, that girl and I had a path. Jennie Lou was her name, and we'd meet half-way. Old man Carnahan didn't want her fooling around with Lincecums.

But I left early and walked past the half-way point. Near the Carnahan house, off in the woods, I saw Jennie Lou feeding the biggest, blackest hog I ever saw. "Bear!" I screamed.

She charged. We crashed into each other, fell over in the leaves, and I started hugging and she started licking. She had gained a hundred pounds, was covered with the slickest hair you ever saw, and we wrestled around under the trees until I couldn't get my breath.

Sitting on the ground, the bear still licking my ears and wanting to wrestle, I looked up at Jennie Lou. "How'd you find her?"

"I heard her whimpering in the woods the morning after Hoss shot her," the girl I now knew I loved said. "Good thing it was squirrel-shot. I fixed some medicine and doctored her. She stays out in the woods somewhere, and I feed her."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

Her hand reached over, gently scratching the bear between the ears. "Afraid, I guess. I didn't want Hoss to find out."

We sat beneath an oak, the bear sleeping between us while we rubbed its silky fur. After a long while, the bear got up, yawned, and licked us both in the face. Then she shuffled away. We watched her disappear through patches of sunlight filtering through the trees and glistening from her fur.

Jennie Lou looked over at me, her eyes shining. "She's pregnant . . . and so am I."

I got home late that night and sat on the front porch, darkness surrounding me as I rocked gently back and forth in Momma's chair and rubbed the yellow dog. The moon slowly rose out of the woods, cast a pale glow over the gravel road and the sleeping hogs, and painted a golden, shimmering path across the water of Lincecum Bayou Lake.

The yellow dog stood up, stretched, and, like he could count, looked for a long moment toward the dim, sleeping forms out in the gravel. Then he growled at something he could see in the shadows at the edge of the woods, turned, and placed his head in my lap.

"Yellow Dog," I said, "when I've got enough money in the fruit jar to buy a pick-up with a camper shell, me and Jennie Lou and our baby and that bear and its baby are gonna hit the road. And we ain't never coming back to Lincecum Ridge.

I slipped inside and went to bed, leaving the yellow dog guarding the hogs and watching the adows.

Momma called out in the dark: "That you, Johnny Ray?"

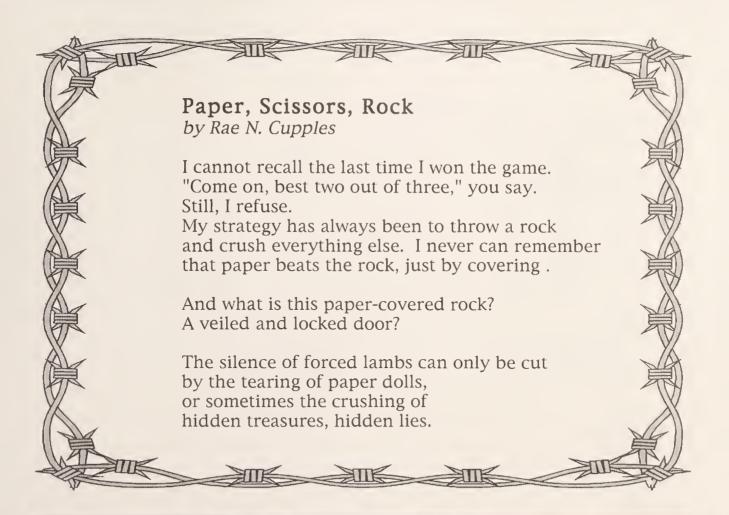
"Yes, ma'am."

"You been over on Thicket Ridge?"

"Yes, ma'am." Then I said, "Momma, I'm gonna marry Jennie Lou Carnahan."

"That's good," Momma said. "She comes from a fine family."





Trading Places by Hollie Moran Does anyone out there Feel like trading places With someone Who's tired Of hiding? Let me be the one To bask in the light And rise to the top. And stand on the ground Where the trees No longer hide me And I'm not in the shadows Anymore.

My Friend, the Purple Pen by Ed Steele

you don't know me -just call me Ed.
different
unchoosing
the round hole
the square peg.

coldly quiet muscles tremble and jerk winter wasteland shadows threaten and lurk.

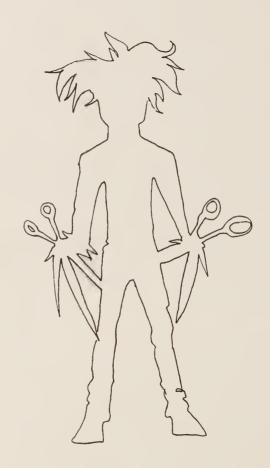
sharp steel gothic green black locks frayed obscene.

dark orbs lonely longing a sweet someone need belonging.

scissors cut create and mold icy statues too cold to hold.

a one-time friend listened and played found another then walked away.

now there's no one. not one friend just the paper and my purple pen.



(TWO) by Angelica Kraushaar



Internal conflict
I stand alone, outside
hoping you notice
I'm ready to come in
But the table is set
and the guests already
sit at the table
There's no room for me
at that table for two



CALM *by Lisa Price*

"Where were you?"

they said.

I was out on the
train tracks,
absorbing the sound and the smell
of the salt of the sea;
savoring the sweetness and sensation
of the storm that brewed
and the wind that blew.

The ominous clouds
overlooked the land and
overcast the sky with the
gloomy gray
of the deeply-hued limestone
that held the trestles in place.
Here I was sitting,
hoping no train would come
and destroy the calm sky
that preluded the chaos to come.



()	
	Boredom
	by Angelica Kraushaar
	by / Migenea At austraut
	Pen clicking on a desk like an unmetered drumbeat
	Boredom passing from body to desk to floor and back up
	Contagion of a misunderstood disease grabs my brain by the
	neck and holds it tightly until I cannot think
	Trying to break loose leaves my uncontrollable laughing to
	disturb the momentary silence of a room gone bored
	Then they all look at me with their hollowed eyes and
	wonder—then cease
	Their minds are all eaten by the bug while I, entranced,
	watch, my boredom ceasing-but soon I tire and can't think of
	why or what or how or when or even who I am to think anyway
	Because I can't fight don t want who needs
	to feel ?
()	
1	,

The Party Crasher

by Glenn McMann

Stop having such a good time!

Can't you see I feel sad? Can't you see my lonely walk?

Can't you tell my angry face hides my friendless heart? Can't you tell I'm dead inside?

Can you, for a moment, take your eyes off your laughing heart, and see my desperation?

Could you ever understand?

I'm not angry with you.

I'm trapped in me.



OPHELIA'S POEM

by Sunflower Tattoo

Sit up in your castle Prince of Denmark While I drown in my heartache

in my heartache in my foolishness.

I thought that you could put aside your tragedy long enough to love me.

Isolate yourself Prince of Denmark Drink my wine



Untitled

by Angelica Kraushaar

After the dream has left, are you still dancing along the shores of an unknown sea no sand to stand on only broken glass hopes shattered in morning denials I stand with myself, feet bleeding, hoping tomorrow will bring another why, but it won't . . . A shadow passes before my eyes, and they close under its caress, and I sleep--and dream, then awake, and when the dream is gone, I am yet alone . . .



U. N. I. / I. N. U. by Randy Price

U. N. I

You rise from the bed I sink to the couch You pull the lamp on I turn the light off

You open the door I close my eyes You float into the room I knew you would

You sit down beside me I grin within You say, "I love you." I say, "I know."

You shift uncomfortably I feel the tear strike my cheek You ask "Don't you love me?" I don't know

I. N. U.

I rise from the bed You sink to the couch I pull the lamp on You turn the light off

I open the door You close your eyes I float into the room You knew I would

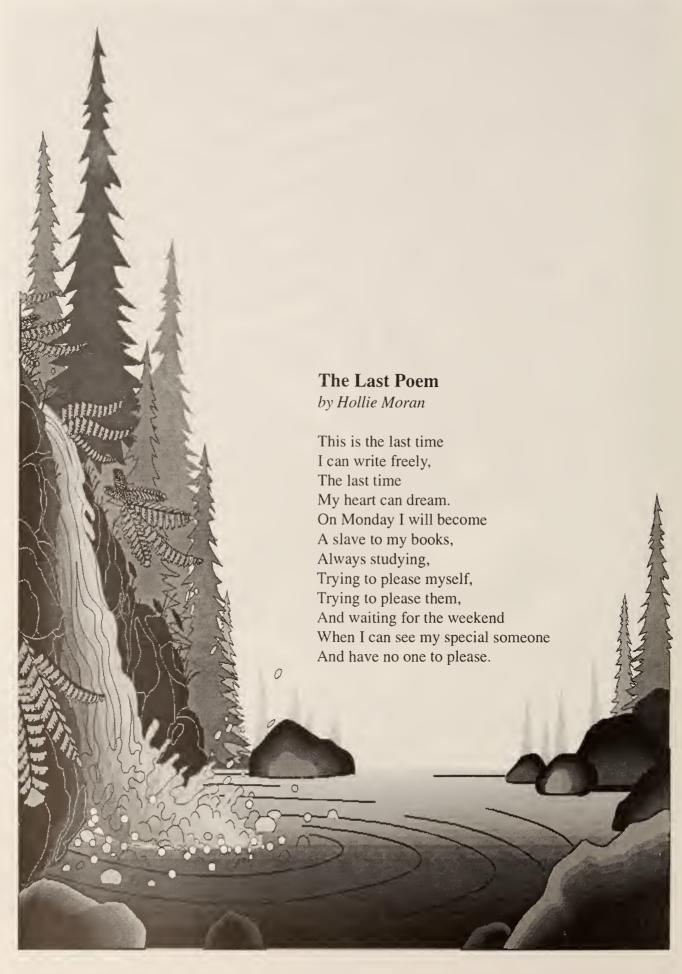
I sit down beside you You grin within I say, "I love you." You say, "I know."

I shift uncomfortably You feel the tear strike your cheek I ask, "Don't you love me?" You don't know.

Now that you're in me, You don't need me in you.



"Nip"- original chalk drawing by Nathan Wood



Two-Thirds of a Love Song by Rae N. Cupples

The hood is still dented in mannequin shapes where we tried to find the Big Dipper. Speckles of stars watched as we pointed too far from real to actually count. But we tried.

And when the weak star fell, I believed you, though my betraying blink missed the dramatic feat, the starry-eyed dream. Sometimes, even now, I do think I see the Big Dipper, organizing the jumbled mass, scooping and capturing far-off suns.



Asphalt Love Affair by Angel Guidroz

floating angel swirls

and twirls in angles, circles

```
patterns.
halo's
rolling
around
with gentle
arms
moving
me,
and rocking
me to
sleep
as I
watch
       alone
      in the
darkness
this
miracle man
who
 sways
with the
rrrrryyytttmmmsss
of the ocean
  and the sky
    and the breeze
      that blows
        him closer
          to my
                     heart
  and closer to my
                                     \mathcal{L}_{\mathcal{I}}
                       soul,
my insides,
my sorrow,
                                   \sum_{i=1}^{n}
my pain,
he understands.
Why does he
understand?
```

He never falls he just rolllllls and spins and dances like a wildcat. like an e a g l e flying, like a coin rolling. shiny and sparkly, and smooth. ballet on asphalt, jamming to some far off song, a melody, a memory, a reason, a call. Dance my mystery man dance to hollow nighttime, dance to solid earth and open skies, dance for me, make me believe. **£** dance on roller skates to the sad happening of the world, and the good happiness of each other. **Σ**,3 **Σ**, **E**

Untitled

by Angelica Kraushaar

Let's walk together And share a word or two Keeping a few secrets between us And hold each other silently For a while. I want to walk with you But speak few words And think of a perfect place Where only we can go For a while. I need to walk with you To share a feeling I have And listen to your voice So I know I'm wanted For a while. Do you wish to walk together? Do you need a friend too? Can you share yourself with me? Wouldn't you like to escape For a while? So let us walk together And talk what's on our minds And when we're done We'll hold each other silently And we'll smile.

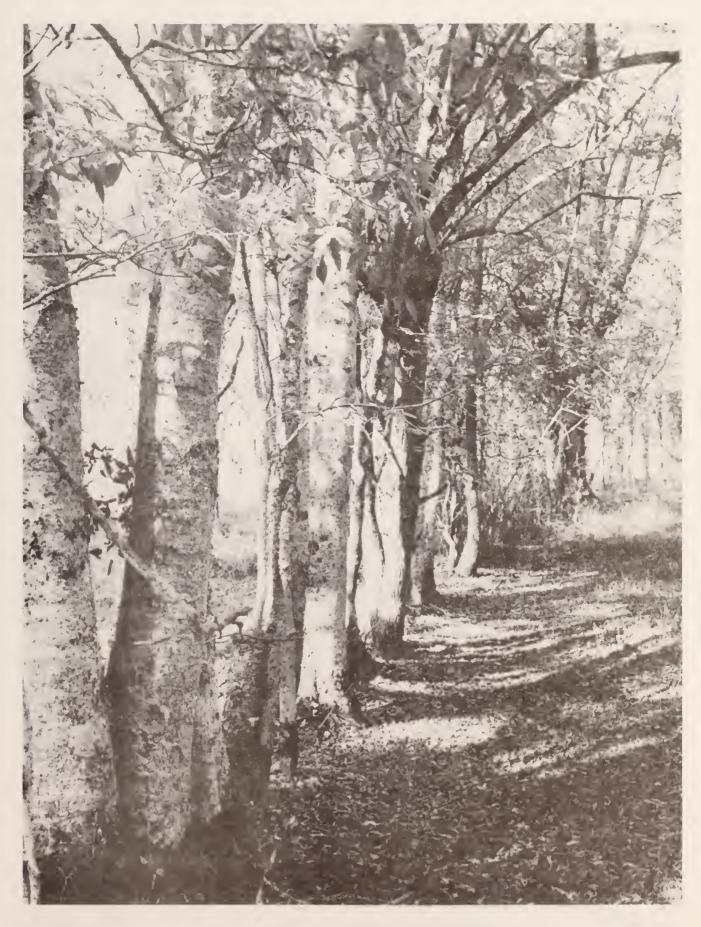


I do by Debra Bailey

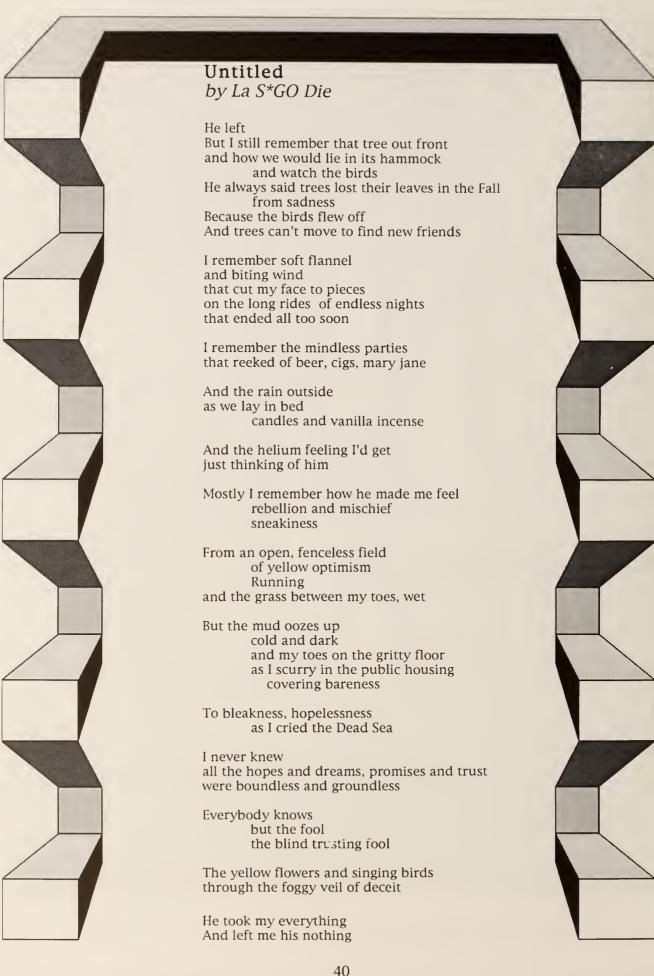
Young, I remember my petticoats, my can-can layers, long braids that the boys pulled, chases and races in the noonday sun. There, I remember the gym dances, forever sweaty, shy, his name no longer familiar. I wore my pink homespun dress with white leotards and wished my legs were out doing cartwheels.

Next, I remember a union like the music in church, a feeling, a time-stepping lurch, or so I thought, this is it, like the turned-over pinwheel.

Now, I know myself leaning on another feeling, a forward march. Am I wanting my own hard handbag? But, I do remember my baby sucking the air long after her bottle, I do.

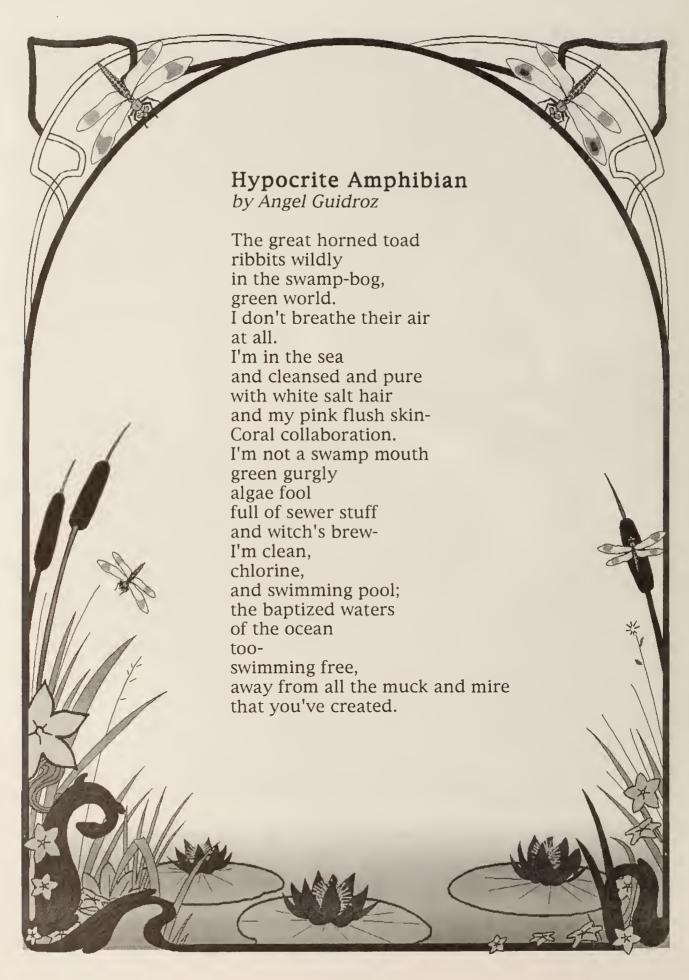


"Old Trail"- original black and white photo by Mark Kapera





"Untitled" - original black and white photo by Julia Hebert





"Masked"-original oil painting by Nathan Wood



Wasps and Mustache Wax

by Rene' Van Slate

The day Sam Irwin cut off his mustache his life changed.

It was 8:05 when he ran up the metal stairs on the side of the warehouse to his office door. He noticed that someone had finally put up his RESTRICTED AREA--AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY

sign that he had asked for six months ago. Maintenance is getting worse, he thought as he turned the key in the lock, kicked the bottom of the door and opened it. As soon as he stepped in the room, he saw something flying at his face and ducked. He looked over his shoulder, and saw a wasp buzz out of the room.

He slammed the door and once again reminded himself to request some spray on his next XK-6 form. A storm two-weeks ago had broken one of the panes in his office window, and the cardboard he had replaced it with was usually blown out during the night. Sam wondered when Maintenance was going to get to this one as he walked over to his desk and tore off the back of another pad of paper. He had made a place for the backless pads on the floor. He shoved the cardboard in the missing pane, looking out to watch the wasps' nest that had been built underneath the roof in the past few days.

The red and black insects were knitting their legs on the mud home, mindlessly thumping into the glass.

Wasps bothered Sam.

He sat down at his desk, and looked around the room. The morning sunlight made little shadow boxes on the floor as it came through the window by his dark-green file cabinet. A window, on the other side of the room, looked out to the skylights in the warehouse roof.

Sam got up and crossed to the glass. Looking down, he saw the maze of the ground floor. Long wooden boxes faded grey were stacked along the walls underneath rows of dust-caked side windows. In the left corner by the 35 foot roll-doors, battleship anchors sat and waited with miles and miles of coiled rusty chains. The sign above them read: #1 IN SCHEDULE, #1 IN INTEGRITY SUPPLY CENTER 6210. In the center of the floor, three 20 foot crates held black crane frames. From where he stood, they looked like a huge metal bird in a cage. Lining the back wall were towering grey metal containers spray-painted with AIRCRAFT ENGINES, DO NOT DROP, DO NOT DESTROY. Right underneath the window, Sam could see the round tops of eleven spools filled with fire-hose size cable.

He turned back to his cubicle, looked at his watch and smiled. He sat down on his wobbly wooden office chair, and tore yesterday's page off his desk calendar. Today was Thursday! There were only three hours left until 11:30.

Fridays were the only days Supply Center 6210 got deliveries, so the rest of the week he spent quietly looking out the window. His only other contact with the outside world was every other Thursday, when he was visited by the Inspector General's Office and was asked to submit his inventory for the past week and propose a schedule for the following one. These visits, for the past three months, were administered by Eve Townsend. She was a tall black woman who was the only military employee, in Sam's eyes, that managed to keep his respect. She always kept her promises and got her work finished on time. She was the reason for Sam's excitement.

Looking away from his watch, Sam remembered that he hadn't fixed his mustache before he left his apartment because he had been running late. For just such an occasion, he kept a small leather pouch in his top desk drawer which contained a razor, a tube of mustache wax, a small comb, a round mirror, and a baseball card. Sam dumped the contents on his desk and set the mirror up against a stack of purchase requisitions. He flipped the card over and saw his idol, Rollie Fingers, stare at him. Sam had never wanted to be a relief pitcher for the Padres, but he did want Rollie's magnificent upper-lip. Mr. Fingers' mustache had two gorgeous spit-curls at either end that rolled over half his face. Sam turned to the mirror and frowned.

Military regulations required that all mustaches be restricted to small wispy things with no character. He had been able to hide the small beginnings of his daring grooming, but he knew that after today he would have to shave off the tips. Sam wanted to look perfect when Eve came to see him, because he was going to ask her out to lunch for the first time. He dabbed his fingers in the wax and took great pleasure in noticing the ends curl slightly. He knew Eve would like it. It gives me character, he thought. He smiled at himself in the mirror, and heard someone pounding up the steps to his door. He pulled out the desk drawer, shoved in his toiletries, and stood up.

Two brisk knocks were heard before his boss stepped into the room. Sam smiled weakly and wondered what Commander Peters was doing here. His white uniform glowed against his too-tanned skin. Sam wondered what the occasion was for his attire. Must be a party at the O-Club, Sam thought.

"Irwin," he said and nodded.

"Yes, sir," Sam said and saluted.

"This might seem a somewhat unusual visit to you Irwin," the commander said closing the door. "But, I've been watching you."

"For what reason, sir?" Sam tried to purse his lips to make his mustache look smaller.

"I've analyzed your last three reports and I've concluded that you have acquired a talent for paperwork," he said. He turned to look out the window. "Irwin, I'm not the type of man to beat around the bush. I forecast that you will be promoted if your work stays at the level it has achieved. Would this meet your goals, son?"

"Yes, sir." Sam was really confused.

The Commander turned to him and smiled. "I knew it would," he said. He sat on the edge of Sam's desk. "There is one more requirement you must fulfill before your name can be submitted to the Review Board." He reached

into his briefcase and pulled out a stack of papers from a manila folder. "These are some evaluation files I was given by Captain Mathews. I would like you to demonstrate your talents and complete these by the end of the day. My aide is on sick-leave. Do you have any questions?"

Sam could see that his boss's mind was already on the golf course.

"No, sir," he said. He realized why his boss came to see him and wondered if he could finish the files before Eve arrived.

The Commander was almost half-way out of the door when he said, "I knew you could be counted on. I'll be back at 1700 hours to pick them up. Also in that stack are your promotion forms. Fill them out whenever you get the chance and submit them to me. Oh, and son," he said and gave Sam a pointed stare, "shave your mustache." The door closed and he was gone.

Sam picked up the papers and sat down at his desk. He fingered his mustache, and thought. He didn't like the way he had gotten dumped with his boss's work. These forms are meaningless, he thought. He had found the only way to get all the spaces filled in correctly was not to think about the answer. He filled in the first three blanks, then looked out the window.

The wasps bumped into the glass.

Sam heard someone coming up the stairs. He had started daydreaming about Eve and lost track of time. The clock said 11:45. He opened the drawer, grabbed the mirror, and smoothed out his mustache. He heard the sound of someone walking up the stairs. That's not Eve, he thought and stood still. Every other Thursday he had listened to the soft ping-ping of her feet as she climbed the metal stairs. The noise he heard now was more like squish-squish. After a loud banging knock, Sam opened the door to see Eve's secretary, Ruth.

Sam squinted and asked her to come in. Ruth was an ample dyed-blonde woman who always winked at him when he brought files to Eve's building every Wednesday morning. She was built like his file-cabinet and wore the same color green on her eye-lids. He looked down and saw the squish-squish noise had emanated from her thick marshmallow-boat shoes.

"Hi, Sam," she said, and slowly smiled.

Was she attempting to be coy? Sam thought.

"Hello, Ruth," he said. "What are you doing here?"

"Eve sent me over to tell you she has an emergency and can't make it," she said. She closed the door behind her and looked around for a place to sit.

"Well, thank you for telling me in person," he said. He moved to open the door so she could leave.

She stood sideways by the window and glanced over her shoulder. "She did give me these files to give you," she said. She produced the papers from her enormous handbag, and pointedly gave Sam another smile.

"Thanks," he said. He grabbed one end of the stack and pulled. Ruth wasn't letting go. He looked at her. She was still staring at him, smiling, her

lumpy arm outstretched.

"Yes," he said. He gave her a confused look. She must have taken that as a sign, because she yanked on the folder, pulled Sam over and kissed him full on the mouth. The last thing he saw was her lust-crazed eyes close into a sea of army-green. He pulled her off of him and stepped behind his desk for protec-

tion. He looked down on his desk and realized he now knew what it was like to kiss a file-cabinet.

"Sam, I'm going to be blunt," she said dramatically, "I'm in love with you." She leaned over his desk and said, "We've never actually talked, but I know we're meant for each other. You always make up excuses to come to Eve's office so you can see me." She looked out the window, paused and then turned to look Sam in the eye. "Don't even try to explain. Just be happy that I understand," she said and grabbed his hand.

Sam felt like he was going to be sick.

She let his hand go, gathered herself up and headed for the door. She turned the knob and said, "I don't even have to talk to you to know you're a wonderful person. Know why?"

"Why?" he said. His eyes were watering.

"It's your mustache. It has so much character!" she said. She blew him a fat kiss and squished down the stairs.

Sam sat down at his desk and stared out the window. How did this happen? he wondered. In a daze, he opened his desk drawer and pulled out his mirror. Was his mustache that inviting? It looked a little ragged at the moment. The ends were drooping like wet paper. He took his hole-puncher off his desk and snipped off the curling ends, still sticky with wax. He then took out his razor and dry-shaved the rest off. He cut himself a few times, but the white skin of his upper-lip looked good to him. He blotted the blood with some paper on his desk, then left to get some lunch to settle his stomach.

Sam noticed as he walked to the Bowling Alley's Snack Bar, that everyone he passed looked at him. He opened the glass door, and saw his reflection. He had blood caked on the side of his mouth and little red speckles down the front of his shirt. He went past the lanes and walked back to the orange snack counter and sat down on a stool. His favorite waitress, Naomi, saw him and sauntered over.

"Hey, Sam," she said as she plopped a glass of water by his place, "What you want today?" Sam liked her because she was the type of woman who knows everything if you ask her. When she smiled, you could see her gold tooth with the star on it.

"I want a draft, Naomi," Sam said. He was thinking about Eve and Rollie Fingers.

"That's what you get, sir," she said and laughed. She looked at him more closely from the tap. "What's different about you, Sam?" she said. "You look a little pale." She placed a draft in front of him.

"I don't feel well," he said. He was surprised that she noticed.

"That's too bad, honey," she said. She turned and switched the radio on the counter to a loud bumpy station.

Sam downed his beer, put down a five, and left.

On his way back to the office, he kept his head down so he wouldn't run into anyone he knew. When he got to his office door, wasps dived at his head. He slammed the door and pulled his wobbly office chair to the window. He sat and looked out at the sky.

Sam came out of it when the door opened and in walked Commander Peters. Sam hadn't heard him knock. He looked at his watch. 1700 hours.

"Irwin, how did those files come out?" he said. He stared at Sam's bloodstained shirt.

Sam went over to his desk and picked up his half-done work and said, "Here they are, sir." As he was handing them to the Commander he noticed that the top page was anointed with blood drops and the curly tips of his mustache, which had glued themselves onto it also.

The Commander just shoved them into a manila folder and said, "Well

done." He gave Sam a strange look and left.

Sam walked to his chair by the window and sat down. He laughed out loud because he knew that he had just lost his job. The wasps outside kept buzzing and banging into the clear pane as they tried to get inside. Sam lost his train of thought.

He hated those insects.

He grabbed Eve's files from his desk and pushed out the cardboard so he could get at the wasps. He stood up on his chair and with rolled up files in hand, stuck his arm up to his elbow out the window and tried to bat down the nest. The last thing he remembered was the chair slipping out from under him and the back of his head hitting the floor.

He came out of the blackness and thought he saw an angel.

"Sam," it said, "Are you all right?"

It looked like Eve, only fuzzier. "Eve?" he said.

"You must've fallen, Sam. Can you sit up?" she said.

"Eve, I love you," Sam slurred. His head was buzzing as he tried to move. "Are there wasps in here?"

"What? Sam sit still, I'll call a doctor," she said. It was definitely Eve. Sam looked up at her and tried to focus on her face, but couldn't. Her uniform, still crisp at the end of the day, made everything a blurry green. She smelled like starch and ink.

"No, No... I'm OK.... Really," Sam said. His smile turned into a wince. He looked around and saw his chair turned over on the other side of the room. "How did you get here?"

"I told Ruth to tell you about my emergency, but I never know what she is going to do. So, I came by to make sure..."

Sam stared at her. "What emergency?" He wanted to see her eyes.

"Oh, I forgot to go over some files Ruth did and I wanted to make sure they were correct, so I had to track them down all day. When I finally found them..."

The buzz in Sam's head was getting louder. Eve was still talking about the files. All he could make out were the brass buttons on her uniform. She went out of focus.

"Sam..." she said. She had stopped talking and was standing by the phone. "No, don't call the hospital. I'm fine." Sam stood up and watched as all the contents of the room, including Eve, swirled around for a moment, then settled back down.

"Sam...," she said. She sounded tired.

"I just fell from the chair when I was trying to fix that window," he said. "I'm just going to sit here for a minute and then I'll be fine." She was already trying to find her car keys.

"You're sure?" she said.

"Yeah," he said. Her face was hidden as she fumbled in her purse. Sam noticed that she looked like everybody else.

"Well, I'll see you tomorrow and we'll work out those inventory files, OK.?"

she said. She stepped out the door and ping-pinged down the stairs.

Sam turned around and went to his desk. He opened the top-drawer and replaced the contents of his leather pouch, except for the baseball card, and put it in his pant's pocket. He picked up the card and looked at Rollie Fingers. That's character, he thought, and placed it in his shirt pocket. He left his key on the desk, then turned to walk out the door. He could feel his mustache growing already.



HARRY ON THE INSIDE

by Michael Hunt

When day darkens and night abounds,
When the skull scales the wicked sky,
When hair grows long, and sin surrounds,
It is then I go a-hunting;
Then that others die.
Fangs flash, claws slash in the pale moon light.
Teeth gnash, veins splash; O what a wondrous sight!
Evil man, good man, woman, or beast-They're all meat for my grisly feast.
The weak, the meek; they tremble at my song.
Mother Moon guides me; beckons me to wrong.
"He's so cute, he's so sweet, he's so nice . . ."
Merely my masks; facades meant to misguide;
For, if mirrors could show my inner vice,
You'd know that I'm really hairy inside.



The Return of Father by Gene Watts

The sharp smell of Whiskey, the liar's smile, and false teeth all announce your coming

I look into my yard and see the withered plants and dead trees that are your legacy.

I am your progeny and
I have weak eyes but a raging soul.
And I await your arrival with the keenest of blades.



"Cicada"-original pencil drawing by Nathan Wood

REUNION

by Carolyn Breedlove

Just last Sunday, we were riding our bikes in the Marina. That's not a place I normally go, but it's nice there. It wasn't hot, the wind off the water was pretty stiff: a little *dangerous*, it always seems, when even small boats and seagulls stay in. Sally was wearing her usual--well, I've said to her face that she dresses like a damn librarian. Sort of like that, some preppy khaki Bermuda shorts, a neat white shirt, little cloth hat. I mean, I'm into fashion, I guess I like the change, or some might say the one-upmanship.

Anyway, she was telling me--we had stopped to rest at that park out by the ships, pretty warm after all--about the deal with her boyfriend. They'd been having lots of problems, and I think poor Sally was just at the point of not knowing what to do anymore, how to proceed. She was sitting there pulling up the grass bit by bit, staring right into the wind, out at the empty space past the masts that's the ocean. When I do that it makes me cry, the wind, I mean. She looked so romantic, like the figurehead on an old ship. I sat hugging my knees, watching the sun flash off the tans of two girls racing away down the bike path, and saying "Damn it, Sally," every now and then to show I was on her side. Not too often, though, because she actually wasn't giving me a whole lot to go on. Nothing juicy, no heartbreak, nothing real. She actually *said*, in that tense little voice, that she wouldn't hover forever, she'd have to light, like a fly, even if it meant taking off again right away, even it meant getting swatted.

God! Was she serious? Was she trying to gross me out? Was she just hypnotized by the sound of her own voice, or what? We were getting nowhere, except that I was queasy from picturing Sally as some horror movie mutant. I finally just said all of a sudden, "Well, give it up. Leave him, Sally, don't take any more shit."

She stopped cold. I mean, everything was suddenly so still I noticed for the first time how the flags were all snapping, the halyards clanking against masts like some neighbor's cheap windchimes you can't turn off.

"No, Jill," she said finally. The wind shredded her hair over her face when she finally looked at me. Her laugh was hard to tell from a sigh. "I can do what I have to, I do know myself that well, at least. But that's not the solution yet, I'm not the solution yet, I'm not ready."

Okay, still--she needs someone to talk to, and I'm *glad* it's me. If she needs me, if she can confide in me, fine, that's the least I can do for her. Sally's a wonderful person.

We meet for lunch once in a while. Our schedules don't often mesh. I'm between jobs, taking a few classes at the community college to avoid being a receptionist again, to avoid feeling like a linguistics major gone bad. Sally's about to get her master's so she can teach Spanish. Anyway, we get together now and then, though it's not easy. I'd be ready to more often, I'm available. But lunch, to me, is something that comes out of a brown bag. Sally can't be bothered. So we usually grab some sort of take-out and just sit outside somewhere, on campus, in a park. Picnic, sit on the grass, commune with nature. That's what Sally says, joking. It's not so bad. Dinner together would be spe-

cial, we'll do that one of these days.

* * *

I've known Jill for a long time. I don't see her very much any more. We have different interests. I still play the piano; she stopped years ago. We like to read totally different books. I like mysteries, Gothics--I know it's disgusting, but there you have it. On the other hand, I won't set foot in one of those soap operas, those costume movies, and Jill is fascinated by them. Being in a relationship does absorb a lot of time, too, a lot of attention. Jill would probably mention that. She--no, it's not exactly *resents*, but is certainly *aware* that I'm with someone and she's not. I can't help that.

I mind most that my situation has gotten--problematic, at just this point in school. I want a stable, secure career, and I need to finish my thesis. I can't begin to tell you how busy I've been, and squabbling at home (yes, squabbling,

disagreeing, not communicating) does not help.

So I know I've put Jill off. I've put off lots of things. She's not my only friend. I keep a list of people I need to write to: when I write to the first one on the list I move that one to the end, and so on. Well, I haven't written to *anyone* in months! I need to, one, get my degree, have that behind me; and two, get this Craig business (Craig is my boyfriend, for lack of a better word) squared away. I do love him, but that alone can't determine the course of my whole life.

* * *

Sally hasn't been free for dinner, for one reason or another, for a *long* time. One of the main reasons recently has been her boyfriend, Craig, they've been spending a lot of time together. Actually, it's been over a year that they've been together, but about six months ago she moved in with him. A mistakenot living together, necessarily, but going to his place. I told her that they needed a whole new place that was *theirs*. I've seen it happen, he's used to having it all to himself. If anyone could adapt, it might be Craig (we've both known Craig for ages), he's generous, patient. He has these hazel eyes that are so earnest, and little brown curls that make him look like a sweet child who couldn't possibly make any mischief.

I gather it's not smooth sailing, though, from what little she says. Well, that's okay, some things people really don't care to talk about. Even me, I can talk and talk just to be saying *some*thing, and still never get at what's on my mind. That's funny, don't you think, everybody does it, even you, I'll bet. Do we even hear what we're saying? All this upfront talk is a big, flashy wall, just like the walls they paint doors and roads on in cartoons, so that there's that illusion of openness, of penetration. The roadrunner is convinced, no problem. It's the coyote himself who can never get through.

So after six months things are a little rocky. I think Craig's a little demanding, maybe a *lot*, maybe unreasonable. Mind you, I've laid eyes on Craig maybe twice in the last six months. They had me over one night for dinner, and I ran into him at the hardware store, of all places--I was looking for some

picture hangers, and he was buying a washer for the kitchen faucet. Just hi, how are you, how's Sally? Maybe they're simply realizing they're not compatible after all. People need different things. Sunday I talked her into going to a movie with me Friday night. I can't see her moping around trying to decide whether to get squashed or not.

* * *

I did agree to go with her to see *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* Friday. Neither of us has ever seen it, it'll be an outing together, it'll be a little break for me, and I can use the practice--hard as it is not to read the subtitles. I've been thinking I should tag along with my mother's tour group to Spain and Greece this summer, certainly if I can't work things out with Craig. Mother is a history professor, she usually volunteers to head a summer tour.

I've been going abroad since the summer I turned fifteen. I'm still amazed that Jill never has gone, she was the one everyone *thought* would travel. At first when I showed my slides to people, it was Jill who could identify them. Big bronze doors behind a fence, crawling with carving awkward silence with me mumbling? Jill to the rescue: the Gate to Paradise, Florence. Frankly, it got embarrassing. *I* was the one who had taken the pictures. But *she* wanted to have been there, I know she did, she was drooling all over the projector.

I didn't stop her. It was never money, her family was as well-off as mine. Not rich at all, but--comfortable. I wish she *would* go. Maybe I wouldn't feel somehow--*unworthy* any more, because honestly, to her travel, art, all that, is like oxygen. To me it's interesting, educational--oh, *broadening*, you know the cliche. I've seen *her* positively rapturous in a museum, as if her blood had been renewed and she were glowing. Oxygen burns, too, to stretch a point. It's dangerous.

* * *

I'm excited, frankly. It's been so long since Sally and I really did anything together, the way we used to. In high school we'd spend the night at each other's houses and right after getting home be on the phone. It did get to be very nearly like looking into a mirror, that togetherness, we finished each other's sentences. But we were wound up tight in loneliness and fantasies, repeating movie plots and dreams to each other in the minutest detail, making up romantic stories if we ran out of other material, lusting forlornly after somebody we'd seen or at school who was completely out of the question.

We were *not* popularity queens by any stretch of the imagination. Sally had the makings, shiny dark hair, amazingly clear skin, but didn't even seem to realize her luck. She was so nervous, and though everyone was watching her every move. Hey--who am I to talk? High school is terrible, adolescence is excruciating. Did I say adolescence? Check out *life*. Did I think I would still be driving an old Chevy, living in a picturesque ethnic dump? What happens now, though, is this; just when I start getting really worked up to the point of doing something--*anything* lucrative, forget job satisfaction--changing my life,

my address, I stop. I think ,wait a minute. What is the point? I'm comfortable, I'm healthy, I eat regularly. How many people in the world can say that? What right have I to spend my life chasing more? There are children gathering individual grains of rice from the dirt, walking a hundred miles living on grass. I tell you, I see their faces in *dreams*, now.

* * *

Has Jill told you she was a National Merit finalist in school? No, I didn't think so. She never mentions it, except to laugh at herself and contrast that with whatever her life is now. *She's* the one forever wanting to meet for lunch, I'm sure you've heard, but Jill *always* brings her lunch in a brown bag--I mean, the *same* bag for a week or so. And then is sore of apologetic, certainly knowing everyone is looking at her with her little rumpled bag and getting her number. It's frugal of her, God knows, but basically eliminates restaurants. They're not going to be ecstatic to see dear little Jill spreading out her paper towel from home, let's face it.

At any rate--kids were a little in awe of her back then, and being as shy as she was made her seem aloof, too. They could see right through her pretense of being one of them, or being normal. I got good grates, but it involved intense cramming. That helped, but not enough to save me.

Do you know, I never had a date in high school? Not one. That's when Jill and I really spent a lot of time together. Sometimes it was too much. I'd go a couple of weeks or more without calling her at all, and spend all my free time with Sybil, my other friend. Sybil was dumpy and terrified of boys and would do whatever I wanted, to have someone to be with. I've never said that before, but it's true. After two weeks so of an alter ego, a groupie like that, I'd be so bored I'd finally call Jill, and we'd pick up where we left off.

* * *

Oh, I was self-conscious, too, to the point of paralysis. Maybe everyone was and some of us hid it better than others. And innocent. Sally and I knew only what we'd read.

When we were fourteen, we went away with our school band on our first end-of-the-year trip. Galveston: a sunbathing, partying frenzy just on the edge of an old city, the real one, that barely knew we were there, and didn't care. None of us cared, either, then: the facade we were offered was plenty. To our surprise, though--Sally's and mine--almost everyone in the band gradually paired off for the duration. I mean, they weren't screwing, generally, just hanging out, making out if the chaperones got far enough away. It was a big motel, all turquoise and white, lots of dark spaces under stairways and the tropical shrubbery, lots of openings to the pool and patios. The humid nights flickered with neon, the salty breeze never let up, who could blame anyone? I doubt we'd have been as shocked if we hadn't been left over, left out. But we had, so we went everywhere together for four days, got sunburned at the beach, saw movies, bought souvenirs like a couple of old maids. Our last morning,

buses waiting as a wet wind slid crumpled sheets of rainwater clear across the blue cutout of the pool, a surfer was lost. The flashing lights and commotion drew everyone across the street to the beach walk. We stood in knots of bright colors and wacky prints, the wind that had drowned him whipping us, and tried not to stare at some unknown boy's brother and girlfriend, their faces hard and gray as the rescuers gave up searching.

* * *

I wanted--I always did want just to *fit in*, to be inconspicuous, one of the gang. Really. Jill could not pull it off, not--as I think of it--because she wasn't perfectly capable of the small talk, of hitting the right vacuous note, but because she wasn't perfectly capable of the small talk, of hitting the right vacuous note, but because she couldn't sustain it, couldn't bear to, lost interest, focus, I don't know. It wasn't important enough to her. *She* believed that out in the world adults discussed meaningful issues in complete sentences, took things seriously. Knowledge and wit were as much a part of her whole notion of glamor as the latest fashions.

I didn't start out to study Spanish. Jill did, languages had always come so easy to her, like everything, as if they were already there in her head and all classes did was let them out. I just didn't want to wind up teaching history the rest of my life. When I decided to change my major I sat on my bed in the dorm late one night and told Jill. She had been sleeping, and I wasn't sure whether she didn't understand or didn't care.

"I know I'll never be as good at it as you," I said. I *said* that to her! "I'll have to really study a lot."

"Mm," she said. I spent my junior year in Barcelona.

* * *

We roomed together in college for a while. Innocence was going like a two-for-one special, we'd arrived determined to smash it and stomp the shards into the dirt. We went through a phase of picking up strange guys together. Yeah, I guess we were teases, sort of, but we didn't mean it. I don't know how they could have thought we meant it--even with absolute strangers we couldn't get the talk or the gestures right. We were scared shitless. The serious stuff had to wait till we soloed, till we couldn't see (Sally literally, she was at the same time forcing herself to like beer).

There were some tense times. Sometimes we'd rub each other's shoulders and just listen to records. Still, it was around that time I could first sense--right in the middle of some X-rated date review--fears, pain, maybe, that she didn't share even with me. At first I was hurt, actually, but I never let it show.

She thought I didn't care that she changed her major, I know that. I couldn't believe it, let me tell you. She'd never even *liked* languages, they were *painful* for her. I'd had no warning, I was half asleep, it was dark. *Then* she told me she could never be as good at it was I was. My God, it took all my strength not to cry. Whey was she *humbling* herself, and what was I supposed

to do, to say, that wouldn't sound automatic or phony? It took guts for her to say it, I realize she meant to be honest with herself and with me, and yet--was this a race, survival of the fittest? Why did it matter?

Just after that I met Craig. Yeah, I went out with him first, as a matter of fact. He's two years older than Sally and I, he was a senior, journalism. We went out for six or seven months. Once or twice we doubled with Sally and somebody, and sometimes we'd hang out together, just the three of us. We gave it a shot, but it lacked that edge, I loved him like I'd loved my buddy in third grade. In then end it was like doing it with your best friend. He and Sally got along well, I liked that, they were funny together. I mean it. See, when she was around he had somebody to share classical music with. I like it, but also old blues, also rock'n'roll, also folk sometimes. That's how I know about his unreasonableness, come to think of it. I would get pissed when it was just the two of us, because he would *keep* playing--Beethoven's Ninth, whatever, trying to get me to *hear* it. I'd heard it. Leadbelly? Forget it. It was more peaceful to let it be two against one and read a magazine.

From the first time they went out alone together Sally and Craig clicked. Anyone could see it, the same static charge waiting to pop that had been there all those afternoons listening to Mozart. I'm not completely oblivious. But they are my true friends. A couple of times I'd badgered her into joining us when she was trying to be elsewhere. And then, several years went by before they got around to each other, what with other dates, Sally in Europe, and, I don't know, their thinking I would mind, I guess.

* * *

Can you imagine how uneasy I've felt, how guilty, taking up with Craig after he and Jill broke up? I know the breakup was not my doing. I tried to stay out of his way even afterward. But here it is, we live together, and they never got that far. I have to mention him to her, and I don't know what she's thinking. I sit here in his--our--apartment, and stare at first one window, then another, when he's at work, when I should be writing, studying. From the center of the floor I can see only the sky, sometimes shifting clouds, sometimes blank smog.

And he thinks I'm crazy, complicating life, sees no connection between the two relationships at all. He says she doesn't care, anyway, that *she* broke it off. And it's been years. Then what do I think? Does that mean he loved her? After her he wasn't involved with one person until me. She probably could have had him back if she'd wanted, so that must prove she didn't. But she had it all, then. She was brilliant, she had a boyfriend, she could dance.

* * *

Well. Sally called me back and said why not have dinner, too? I can't believe it. I'll try not to read any special significance into this. It's nice after so long. Nice, that's all.

I'm already sitting by a window at Perry's when Sally walks in and looks around. We decided to come someplace really special tonight. I'm going to have to get a job again soon. She looks beautiful, serene, dark hair all brushed back in a bow, wearing a soft grey skirt and a white shirt. She doesn't look upset any more. And here I sit, the redhead with the extreme haircut, still in my huge red jacket over a minute black dress, the skirt's hardly more than a ruffle. Sally sees me and smiles.

We talk about everything over diner, or just about, reminiscing and laughing, about the plots, the dreams, we shared, the actors and high-school boys we'd wanted.

"Remember? Remember Mardi Gras?"

"But remember the first one, remember Galveston?"

She shakes her head slowly.

"I'd rather not."

"Oh, come on. Remember Gaido's? The finger bowls?" I can still make her smile when she hadn't planned to. "I still have the tiger conch on my bookshelf."

Sally leans back to consider me, not quite smiling, she's thinking I'm coaxing her, like a child.

"I know, I still have my starfish, too." I know she does, I just wanted her to say it. She keeps reminding me that we need to get going to make it to the movie, but I say, ah, forget it, we're having a good time.

"We're going to get married." She says it, and the words balloon there between us as in a comic strip, settling clumsily into the pastry crumbs. The waiter offers us more coffee. Out of the corner of my eye I can see a housefly climbing the windowpane, its clear, webbed wings layered on its back, its huge eyes seeing hundreds of us, like opposing mirrors: back to you--back to you-back to you. No matter how many, it's still you.

I think I feel Sally's hand on my arm, but it's really not. It's just something I would have wanted her to do, I think. I wish she would rub my shoulders again. I go ahead and ask her when, and how, and how did this come about, and are you happy?

Stupid, I can plainly see she is. She's looking at her life and it's a vista, the turnout on a mountain road.

It isn't obvious--to me--till I'm at home, in bed, in the dark. I've lost her, and it isn't sudden, and there isn't anything I could have done.

Listen, one afternoon after my sign language class, I wound up following this man all down the sidewalk to the parking lot. Once I'd noticed him I thought it was Paul Hart, my journalism teacher, but he never turned so that I could see his face. He just kept walking, into the sea wind from beyond the houses and low hills, and I just happened to be going the same way. I was amazed to realize I'd never seen him from the back like that, it was a whole new way of looking at him. I thought it was Paul, it looked like him, in his tweed jacket and jeans. He looked shorter than Paul, than I'd imagined him to bebut then, I'd only seen Paul when I was seated or we both were.

Then I saw the slender hand, the pale fingers clenching and spreading, as in a secret sign, as if releasing a bug or tiny treasure he had held. How many

with the edges of papers, opened and closed just like this. Beautiful hands, they had always surprised me, they looked as if they should be repairing a brain, holding a violin. By that surprising, familiar hand, by its familiar gesture I had never really seen, I finally knew.



The Heart of Truth

by David Alford, Jr.

The heart of truth is a symbolic drawing showing the need for people (symbolized by the human heart incorporated into the root system) to be rooted in the truth!

This drawing was inspired by the artist's belief that when we live according to true principles most of the problems we face in life are eliminated or easier to overcome. The living tree attached to the heart represents the growth and life that comes from being rooted in the truth. The two dead trees to either side represent the consequences of ignorance or failure to live according to truth. The harsh environment of desert and rocks represents the trials and problems of our world and just how harsh and difficult life can be! The river is symbolic of the need for a constant flow of divine knowledge and guidance to nourish our roots. The living tree is symbolic of the victory that is possible if we constantly live according to true principles and follow true divine guidance no matter what the trial of temptation we may be faced with!



Elemental Advice

by Susan Dollar

Do what you must in any moment to be just what you are And know that the hollows will be filled and the mountains will wear away.

Be like the sun

shine softly at dawn as you rise shine full at midday as you work shine gently at dusk as you rest and give light to the darkness around you.

Be like water

seek the low ground first fill every crevice you meet along the way soak slowly to the depths and nourish all with suckled wetness of heaven.

Be like the wind

encompass all leave no place untouched tickle the sky with your dance and give breath to the voice of meaning

Be like the earth

keep still look within hold close to richness there receive and create the cosmos.

Do what you must in any moment to be just what you are And know that the hollows will be filled and the mountains will wear away.

And it will be you who abides
it will be you who endures
it will be the timeless triumph of you
which will loose the bonds of
cycles in time
and repetitive patterns of
greater and lesser.

Peace.



"Frigga"- original pencil drawing by Julia Hebert

Winter by Angel Guidroz



WINTER one (Brainstorm)

Skin grev, drv. desert-sandv . . . Wet armpits, from too many layers. cold fingers. fingers like sticks. broken bark skin stuck . . . rooted . . . like a tree unmoving. No decisions. like the child standing by the refrigerator with an ice cube stuck to her tonguetongue burnt, sore. Hollow. empty tummycold line through me from my throat to my gut, splits, shakes breaks down to the bottom of me until it's all gone. melted. Cried to sleep under winter covers.

WINTER two (revision)

Winter sticks to me, like ice cubes fresh from the freezer, sticking to my tongue-hurting, burning, then melting down to my empty tummy.

With a cold line through me from my throat to my gut it splits me, shakes me, breaks down to the bottom of me, until it's all melted away.

Cried to sleep under winter covers; wake up from hibernation with red spider webs in my eyes.
I try to pull them out with wishes, but it's wintertime.
It's too grey all over for wishes to thrive.

Pitter Patter to the freezer for a piece of ice. It's diamond brilliance dying in my mouth. Wordless explanation for this arctic freeze only comfort is my baby blanket igloo.

The Way Out

by Carolyn Breedlove

Karol had walked all the way from the 65th Street station in the heavy, contained afternoon heat, past the wan little shops, the upholsterers, auto mechanics, occasional baker, and the odd, boarded-up storefront. He was back in Bensonhurst, now, the big sycamores poised motionless on each street of 20th Avenue. He leaned into the recess of the dark little shop on his corner before he quite reached it, as if bent by magnets, feet catching up to his top half just as he merged with the darkness and eased the screen door shut. Still, a bell plinked dully in a back room, and immediately little Mr. Santino appeared, slightly stooped, tilting his head back to see through his bifocals.

"They are ready, yes, yes." He nodded impatiently before Karol could ask. Ready or not, they were never relinquished without the ticket. Karol stood at the scarred wooden counter, already opening his wallet for the green stub. He thumbed it out and handed it to Mr. Santino, who then turned and peered at the narrow shelves pungent with shoes. In a moment he had seized Karol's good black ones, inverting them with one hand to display the new soles while snapping out a crumpled bag with the other.

"Twelve dollars, is that right?" Karol asked. He cleared his throat. He knew, of course, that it was. He handed over a twenty between his thumb and forefinger. As he did, he saw the plaid sleeve of his suit coat, two sandy hairs curled on it. Deliberately he lifted them, one by one, and dropped them on the floor. Two more gone. He opened his palm for the change Mr. Santino counted out, then stared at his hand for all of five seconds.

"Mr. Santino." The old man paused, lips tight, hands on hips to emphasize the bother. "It's too much, you gave me one too many."

"Too much?" he scoffed. Karol spread the bills.

"See, one too many."

"Karol, you're so honest. You're too honest, that's your problem." That wasn't Mr. Santino, that had been Lily. It was one of the things she used to say. He had walked by Alba's one Thursday afternoon and seen her sitting in there, kissing some man over cups of Italian ice. Lily hadn't been honest, so why should what she said be true?

Mama would have his dinner waiting. He tucked the parcel under his arm and turned to go home.

* * *

Angelina sat sewing at the dining table, hemming Karol's brown slacks sprawled on the green plastic tablecloth. The still air was thick with the smell of lentils, of sausages with peppers, everything done and waiting. Karol pulled off his coat and bent to kiss her cheek. Her needle darted in and out of the dark cloth like a bright fish trying to hide. She wore a thimble, one of her mother's from the years of sweatshops. They had fascinated Karol the boy: whenever he had caught his grandmother in a rare indulgent mood (though never indulgent quite to the point of calling him anything but Carlo) he had

taken them one by one from her wicker basket and lined them up by size and shape. Dark, silvery, heavy, light, they had stood on this very table like headless helmets, like baskets for fish or some shell game. But the one that had always fascinated him the most--he reached over now and plucked it from his mother's, grandmother's sewing basket--was the wide thimble with no top. If his grandmother had ever really answered him he could not remember her response. Mama said it was for sewing coats, for pushing through the heavy material, and he accepted that.

The telephone jangled with a force that almost moved the air.

"Not again!" Mama pushed away from the table with both hands. Karol wondered vaguely what "not again" meant this time as he watched the thimble turn in his hand, sticking the tip of his ring finger in first one end, then the other, tumbling it end over end with his thumb.

"Yeah, I called you," Mama was saying in the living room. Someone interrupted her, because she raised her voice one level. "Don't 'now, Lina' me, Carmine. It's been two months." It was her cousin, who owed her \$100. Karol ducked and snatched the open thimble before it could hit the floor, cupping it in his palm and closing his fingers over it. He set it gently in the old basket and went to put away his shoes and wash up.

The bluish dimness of the bathroom was an ice palace, a misplaced day from last week, when there'd been the promise of fall. The difference between his skin temperature and that of the air was a shock. He turned on the cold water. First he soaped and rinsed his hands, then he raised the water again and again to his face, holding the coldness there till it slipped away. He scarcely saw, any more, the air-conditioners in the windows of his mother's bedroom, the living room, and the kitchen. His father had put them in, intent on progress. That made it--fifteen years, last July, since they had been used. The family had come back here after the funeral and sweated over the food, squirming in their good dark clothes.

His grandmother, some two decades earlier, had flung herself out the door, hair spilling indecently, shrieking and crying and beating her bosom in the narrow driveway, when the telegram from Angelina had come. Her parents violently opposed, on the brink of shipping her off somewhere, maybe to Palermo, she had eloped. With a Polack. From Chicago. With no family, except an older sister who lived in Denver. Karol had heard the story enough times, though his mother didn't like to talk about it. Certainly never from his grandmother.

It has been wild, flagrant, a delicious story to hear as a child. He had loved it, never separating how much love went to the romance and how much to the audacity, the stark, meat-cleaver break with authority. He could almost hear the blade hit the block, *whack!* One stroke.

Karol pressed the towel to his cool cheeks. *One* stroke. It was the last bold thing his mother had ever done. After the first couple of months, as if in penance, she and his father had lived twenty-one years in the apartment downstairs, taking care of her parents till they died, finally inheriting the house itself over his uncle Sal, who had moved to Florida. Nothing changed, nothing removed, the whole place a shrine to the tradition she had defied.

Of Jozef, his father, Karol had his name, for this grandfather; a random word or two of Polish; and a few stray anecdotes. And his looks, which after a lifetime on this block still marked him. He was a part of the scenery, accepted, but it would always be the first grade: Licari, Pantano, Patti--Rogowski--and bloody little noses following rude remarks.

Bowls of lentils, one white and shallow, the other a blue hemisphere, steamed on the kitchen table. Mama stopped, the bottle of seltzer in one hand and half a loaf of bread in the other, to glare at him, then set them on the table and sat. Karol took his usual seat at the end of the table, to her left. For at least the thousandth time he wished she'd take down the steer horns over the door to the back stairs. He knew they'd been, long ago, for the evil eye, but when he was growing up they'd made him feel as if he were on the Ponderosa in his grandmother's kitchen. They still did, but he didn't like it any more, couldn't pretend. They were just the most vivid reminder that they might be living on a movie set.

"So what did Carmine know that's new?" he ventured. Her mood seemed terrible, she was even drinking water instead of wine with her meal.

"Nothing new. Says he'll have \$100 to me Monday. Like last Monday, remember?"

Pointing out she had no urgent need of the money would do no good. He could give *her* the speech on doing whatever it took to keep honor and goodwill in the family. He knew and in an occasional mood even believed. He just didn't want to hear it. He tore off a piece of bread, beginning to sweat again from the lentils.

"Vic and Rosemary have found a place on Staten Island." These were the tenants downstairs, who had three children.

"He'll come in every day from Staten Island to work?"

She shrugged.

"It's three bedrooms, they figure they can afford it. Lots of people do. It's not my problem, renting the apartment is."

"You've never had any trouble." He took his bowl and hers to the sink,

and she got up ponderously to serve the sausage.

"It's twice in just over a year, now." She meant him and Lily, but he gave no sign. He was getting better at it, and at not feeling he'd been kicked in the stomach. "We'll have to paint."

"He just painted!" He ran water into the bowls. A couple of driveways over, someone's wash was still out, flattened and dead in the motionless air. The ceremonial squeak of a clarinet began.

"Listen," Karol said softly. "Do you want to take a walk later, over to the avenue?"

"If I wanted to go the festa, would I have cooked?"

Karol turned, but instead of sitting back down to the hot plates Mama was filling, on impulse he passed through the darkening dining room.

"What are you doing, your food's ready!" she called after him, shouting

suddenly as if startled, attacked.

"Just a minute, I just want to see . . ." he continued through the living room's forest of heavy wood and plastic covers to the little glassed front room.

At that instant they were directly in front of him, the small throng herding up the street. Children playing on the sidewalk paused in their games. Old women in lace mantillas carried rosaries; two of them clutched papers they handed to people stopping on the sidewalk and between parked cars. Younger women and girls followed, and a couple of men. In the center were the men with the statue--they were carrying Saint Rosalia to 18th Avenue, where she would stand in front of LaBella's mortuary. The clarinet swirled solemnly, steadily.

Mama was suddenly beside him, crossing herself involuntarily. The procession was passing them. The sun would be down soon: it's low rays slipped between the buildings and trees to single out a car parked on the street, to gild

one corner of a house, like the first letter of a gospel.

"Your whatchacall', that girl--she called for you today."

"What?" Karol still stared at the tiny parade. Rosalia's long, silky veil lifted delicately, fluttered, then sank into place. He felt the tiniest breath of air on his cheek. Looking up, he realized clouds had formed, all the dimness was not end-of-day.

"What?" he repeated, turning from the window abruptly.

"Lily. She called here."

"Today? What did she want?" The lentils had been a bad idea on a day like this, he felt suddenly queasy.

"What, you think she told me what she wants? To say hello, she said.

After a year she says hello."

Karol studied the jowly face with the tight gray and black curls, but saw a pale oval and sleek black eyebrow. He'd never mentioned the times he'd run into Lily since--they'd nodded, said hi, even chatted briefly. She'd never been far from the neighborhood. If he saw her with Tony, he let himself go unseen, his specialty, after all. Honest, hell. He never had finally balanced out who he'd been raised to be with what he seemed to be, Carlo inside with Karol outside, pride and knowing what he wanted with practiced invisibility--any more than he had ever decided whether the romance of his mother's story was the audacity. Or vice versa. Just now he felt as if the endless thimble had him by the middle, all his life bulging to either side like an hourglass and slipping steadily away.

"I told you, I didn't have to," his mother went on. "Some ways, I thought it was better not to . . . If she wanted so bad to speak, she'd've called before.

She'd call again."

"She wouldn't call again." That slipped out. "It's no big deal. Did she call from her mother's, was it this afternoon?"

"Her mother's! She's not staying at her mother's, Karol."

He gave her look for look, and in a flash her tone softened, wheedling.

"She's not welcome at her mother's, you know that. She left a number-you don't need this, Karol, for what? In college you learn to be stupid?"

It's nothing. I'll call back and that's it."

She hesitate, mouth open.

"A good many like you, you didn't deserve this." My God, don't let her start. In his mind again suddenly was the Ponderosa, because he'd thought of it earlier, surely, but now more for the bonanza of vast open spaces and the

it earlier, surely, but now more for the bonanza of vast open spaces and the silence, the sound of the wind, the simple, physical work to be done. "Always you were such a good boy, no trouble. Why should you have such trouble?" She was back in the darkness of the living room, now, yanking the small, cluttered drawer of the table by the window, drawing out the exact slip of paper without turning on the light.

After a demitasse and the cookies from Alba's sesames and half-chocolates, after his mother had put away the last dish and gone to bathe, Karol stripped to his briefs and lay flat on his bed without the light, studying the far, shifting darkness that was his ceiling. Through the open window the breeze offered random pieces of the festival: voices, music, noise, then a hollow nothing, its own sighing.

The first time he had ever seen Lily had been at a block party, a dance, which he hadn't gone to for years, but out of utter boredom and a long stretch of aloneness, had made himself attend. That had been three years ago, he'd been thirty-two. She'd been seventeen. He didn't know till later, though he'd guessed it, from the cluster of them in pastel sundresses, giggling like teenagers without steadies. He'd danced with her, once, and with some of the others, and called it a night, probably a mistake.

After that, the pale, think face with the quick eyes had seemed to jump out at him everywhere, like a new word--on the street, in the bakery. He didn't know which had come first, seeing her or noticing her, but had realized both at the same time and wanted more of whichever it was, wanted the soft hair she wore loose to her shoulders, wanted to talk to her, to listen to her, wanted to feel the warm, slender curves of her body, to hold her--and realized with gut-wrenching terror that he was already in love. Not polished enough in the ways of mating to armor himself against it, he'd tried to disappear. For once, it hadn't worked, he hadn't been able even to lose sight of himself, he had been perfectly obvious.

She had gone out with him, and again and often, and soon they were a known couple in the neighborhood. All the while he'd found it quite absurd, had kept waiting for some brash, sexy competition her own age to end it. So young, his mother had moaned. Too free, a flirt, to listen. Too pretty for her own good, you know?

Sometimes on a Saturday they'd gone into the city for the day, visited museums, seen a show. They'd picnicked in Prospect Park, even driven way the hell out into the Jersey hills once, taking Mama in Dad's old brown Buick Karol kept alive for those rare occasions. With Lily it had all been possible, nothing silly unless they both thought so. So she'd turned out to have a temper as black as her hair. So she was a little wild, wilder than he'd been at her age, or ever. She knew how to cook, even the calamari, the ravioli. She'd been reading about the Culinary Institute, thought she'd like to work in the restaurant business. And he had pressed hard, completely transparent: if he didn't have some claim on her, if she went away to school, young as she was, and as beautiful . . . They'd become engaged, and after a year had married. To be honest, there hadn't been much left to learn by then, different as they were, except what it was like to live together, to sleep the night through in the same bed and wake

up by morning light.

He'd been a fool, somewhere, a fool, marrying her too young. Being a hopeless sap, sending her flowers, calling her during the day. Thinking it was all possible, that her plans and his could all coincide somehow--her work, his, a family. He'd been worse, like the real teenager, a stupid confused idiot. She'd been a party to it, but what could she have known? Compared to what?

The curtain lifted slightly, held, then billowed higher, and there was a burst of distant laughter in the room, of shouting against a dim hum of music. The first low growl of thunder vibrated down the walls. Karol sat up. He

hadn't seen the lightning.

He walked barefoot, just as he was, up the hall, past the kitchen. There was still a line of light at the bottom of his mother's door: softly he slid shut the one to the living room. The paper was still on the table. By leaning into the front room and pressing the scrap high against the wall so that it caught the streetlight's water gleam, he could make out his mother's vague numbers.

"Hello?" A woman's voice, but unfamiliar.

"I'm calling for Lily, Lily Rogowski. It's Karol." He didn't know whether she was using his name.

"Hold on." There was a flash, and almost immediately a thunderclap that rattled the windows. As it died away, Karol could hear the hissing of all the sycamores in the unseen wind, and knew the way they were bending and nodding among themselves like gossips.

"Hello?"

"Lily?"

"Karol?"

"You called me?"

"Yes, I did." She hesitated, he thought. "How are you?"

"I'm fine," he said. "Are you all right?"

"Sure--I'm fine."

"So." He waited.

"So, the reason I called?"

"Yeah, what's up? You getting married, you want a divorce, now?"

"God. No. God, Karol--"

"Well, I don't know. What, then?"

She sighed.

"I owe you twenty dollars, do you remember?"

"Jesus, forget the twenty dollars."

"Hey, I'm being honest. Also I'd like to see you, you know? It's been a long time."

"Yeah." The way he said it made her quiet.

"So, is it okay if I come by with the twenty?" she began again.

"Christ, if you won't drop it, I'll come there. Where are you?"

"Now, I'm at a friend's. You remember Jody?"

"Vaguely."

"I don't mind coming to you, you don't have to bother." The house shuddered and Karol was blinded by lightning and thunder at the same instant. "God, that was close!" Her voice sounded squeezed, as if she were catch-

ing her breath.

"Look, is this a rush? Tomorrow's soon enough, right? It's storming out."

"Well, sure. That's okay. It's not your busy season, you're not working, right?"

"Right. Where does this Jody live?"

"Oh, look, it's far. I'm only here temporarily, you know? Why don't you come by Mom's tomorrow morning, I'll meet you there."

"Your mother's? But--"

"Yeah, that's right. I'm not allowed." She laughed, the kind of laugh that isn't funny. "To meet with you it'll be okay."

The big drops had begun to fall, in the street where Santa Rosalia had passed. They came thicker and faster, pounding the pavement and cars. Two men, stragglers from the festival, ran by, fast and slow, suspended in the shuddering wet air as in a strobe light. In the blue flashes Karol could see the trees heaving, twisting, but they could not run.

After an hour he was still there, observing how the wet street was still blue, as if all the dripping fences and vehicles, every droplet and puddle, still contained the lightning. High above, the broken pale clouds were stealing away.

Saturday morning it was fall. Karol pulled on a scratchy dark blue sweater over his shirt. Mama stood pouring coffee in her heavy winter bathrobe the color of moss or mold. It was the first time she'd had it on since spring, and when Karol stood by her to grab a cookie it smelled as must as it looked.

"A cookie first thing! Are you six? You want some Cream of Wheat?"

"No, Mama, thanks."

"Have some figs. It's a good thing I picked them yesterday, the ones on the tree will go sour after the rain."

"Not if we eat them right away." He reached for the bowl of soft brown fruit. You heard all the thunder?"

"How could I not hear it, it kept me awake." She turned from stirring her coffee to look straight at him. "Why are you up so early, you're not working?"

"No, you know I'm not. I'm just going out."

"Out?" True, for all his weekend outings in the last year, it might have been a gibberish word, but he felt like an adolescent, as if she would ask next what he was going to do, and he would reply, "nothing."

"To Lily's mother's."

"Lily's mother's?" Just as he was thinking he would have to shake her out of some trance, she went on, a metallic ring to her voice. "To see Lily? I told you, she's not there."

"She's meeting me there, she needed to see me."

"Needed--Holy Mother of God. Karol--needed? Sure she did. You know, for a year that's not what she needed."

"She owes me some money." She looked hard at him. He could see her trying to decide whether he was making fun of her or telling the truth.

"Honest.."

* * *

The drops and puddles were still there. They were no longer blue, but bright as a million mirrors for the full early sun, shaking and scattering, breaking and reforming in the cold breeze that was rising. It was only three blocks to Lily's old house. On the avenue early housewives were out in scarves and sweaters with shopping bags, an occasional big-eyed child behind them. Merchants were taking down sodden booths along the street; men in jackets and caps and heavy work gloves were already dismantling a couple of carnival rides. Two of them he'd never seen glanced sideways as Karol passed.

The Corelli house was almost exactly like Mama's. The late white hydrangeas, drooping heavy with rain over the iron fence, bounced suddenly in the wind, spattering Karol as he entered the gate. He pressed the buzzer and Lily was there. At the top of the stairs her mother clasped his hand, though her only words were an offer of coffee. She'd avoided him all this time, embarrassed, helpless to change things. She excused herself. Karol stood sternly in the center of the living room.

"Won't you sit?" Lily asked. He looked down at her and tried not to frown.

He felt like smacking her. No, he felt like ripping the baggy sweater and denim skirt off her and doing it there on the floor. That wasn't what he felt like doing, he felt like turning around and walking back out the door. She looked down, away from his eyes, and he felt like--touching her, putting his arms around her, and felt in his stomach the last trace of a terrible pain. He sat, in the brown monstrosity of an inherited chair.

"Thank you for coming." She spoke very softly, and he remembered her mother and sister and maybe even brothers were there somewhere, holding back only out of respect to him. He nodded. She held out a twenty-dollar bill, but not close enough for him to take.

"I have it, it wasn't a lie."

"I didn't say it was." His voice startled him, as if a third person had spoken.

"But you thought I was just using it as an excuse, to get to you."

"Well--"

"That's true, too, it's true." She stood silent, looking at him as if forgetting to speak. "I really wanted to see you, just this once," she said firmly, "because-because there are things I have to say. I have to." Karol watched her warily. Was some horrible confession coming, something he had no intention of hearing? Was she going to make some request? Demand? Should he just stand up and walk out? He didn't need this. She spoke so calmly and deliberately, though: no tears, no bravado. He couldn't see where it was going.

"I want you to know I'm sorry for all that happened." Karol stared at the pale face. There were shadows under eyes. She bit her lip. "I never wanted to hurt you. It was all real, Karol." His stomach flinched again. "I don't know, I

just--"

"You don't have to say any of this," he interrupted. "It's okay, let's just leave it alone now." Lily looked uncertainly back at him, her head cocked. She handed him the money.

"You're right. I know I don't have to--make a speech like this, but I

wanted, once, to say it, to try to set it straight. You know? Not fix it, I know I can't, but just tell you, that's all. I still love you." He stood up at that, shoving the money crumpled into his pocket.

"How's Tony?" She smiled for the first time, the same way she'd laughed

on the phone.

"I guess he's fine, I wouldn't know."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah, he took off a couple of months ago. Not ready for anything bigtime, I guess." Karol nodded, starting for the door.

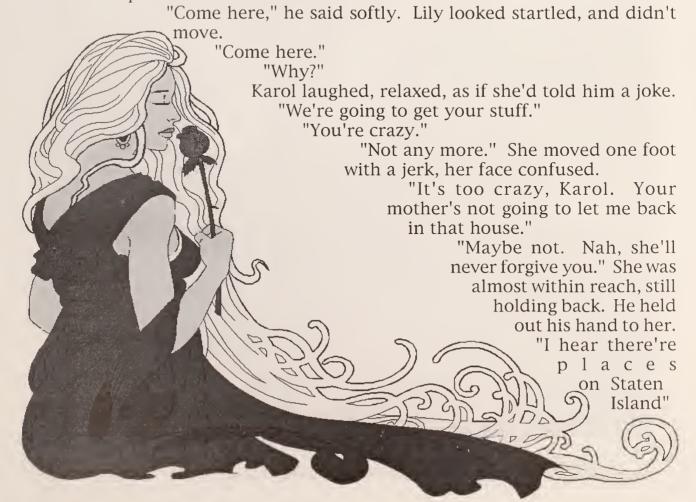
"So you're working?" he asked generously. "That's okay, I know my way out." She still stood in the same spot. "Heading up to Hyde Park to be a chef?"

"Uh, no. Working, yes, in a deli. I'm not going to the Institute." He stopped at the door and turned back to face her. From there he could smell onions cooking, with the house all closed against the chill, could hear faintly a knife thumping on a chopping block.

"Just out of curiosity--why not, now?"

"It is really a lot of money. There are other places, closer. New School of Social Research has the Restaurant School . . ." She looked at the floor again. He waited. When she looked up her jaw was hard. "I'm pregnant."

He couldn't tell, but it seemed his head snapped back, as on impact. When he came to, he was playing the thimble game with his fingers, without the thimble. Over and around, and all there was, was the open space.



CONCERT by Clara Gerl

The beat pulsates, soothing the beast as it screams.

SCREAMING SCREAMING

Rhythm is heard and it separates into a million beings, beings with torches--flickering lights. Each one is entranced, every creature under a spell. The enchanter changes the rhythm and they sway to the sound. This man commands the crowd, he uses his talent to make the others feel awe before him, he controls their minds for now everyone is stunned, hypnotized. They cannot move unless he gives the command.

The enchanter speaks and they quiver. To the crowd he says--change actions. The lights are extinguished.

Now the creatures come together as the beast. The music has reached its highest point and now the crowd feels energy flowing through them. Then the rhythm slowly begins to cease--that is the end of the song.





"Dancing in the Moonlight"-original black and white photo by John Kleisler

Saturday Off by Marcy Frantom

Saturdays they go roller skating. Five days a week there's housework and the factory, but on the sixth two wives close to middle age relearn this slick skill round and round a black oval painted in polyurethane. They orbit the mark: electrons buzzing a nucleus. Again they turn and listen for the tuneless whine of skate bearings. How oddly difficult it is to put one foot in front of the other at the turn as children do, to stop once started. Sometimes they think of nothing at all; they concentrate to gather speed in the straightaway.

When lights fall for couple skating, colored beams facet the turning mirrored ball that speckles wall and floor.

The rule is, two must skate together. Once, dizzied by the sparkling lights, they glided side by side and clawed their hands together to see how easily one can hold another up and flew away into the dark.



I don't normally do things like this. It's not really like me at all, and I wouldn't have done it if it hadn't been for the insistent badgering from my friend Maria, who is desperate for me to "know the joyous bliss of matrimony" like she does. Since I seemed to have trouble finding dates the traditional way, she decided the best way would be to place an advertisement in the personal section of the newspaper. Maria came up with this idea because she works for the newspaper and says she's seen so many ads and so many happy endings. I tried to tell her that the only people who placed these sort of ads were maladjusted losers who couldn't get a date any other way. The look she gave me made me think she considers me to be part of that group.

But I don't think so. While it is true my love-life leaves much room for improvement, I believe that it is because I choose it to be so. I'm perfectly content to remain single but when I tell her this she just says, "Remaining single is one thing, remaining dateless is another," She had a point, which is another reason I may have let her talk me into this. The advertisement, brief and to the point, was typed my Maria and sent to the newspaper, and since the deed was already done, I decided to put it out of my mind and go on with my life.

This was easy to do until a barrage of letters came pouring in from eager respondents, most of which were just as I had imagined, maladjusted people who couldn't find a date any other way. I enlisted the help of Maria and together we read through the pile of letters, searching for a glimpse of normality. I stopped reading the letters altogether after one particularly brazen respondent made suggestions about him, me, and a large vat of jello. Maria, however, continued to read all the letters, gleaning from the masses a few she thought I should read.

One letter in particular caught my attention. It was written by a man named Thomas Arden who said he was a pilot for a major airline. The first part of the letter was stilted and made him sound like a contestant for Wheel of Fortune, but it was the rest of the letter that appealed to me. He sounded warm, caring, a little shy, and most importantly, normal. So late one night after watching a rerun of M*A*S*H, I wrote him back. I told no one, especially Maria, who I knew would blow it out of proportion.

In fact I didn't tell her until I'd received his second letter along with a picture of himself. He looked so nice and in the letter seemed so intelligent that I finally broke down and told Maria. The smug look she wore as I told her confirmed my suspicions that Maria considered herself my only means of salvation.

I allowed Maria a few moments to gloat, then I told her about the latest letter and how I'd been impressed with it. Thomas seemed to have such a love

for life and adventure. He seemed so bold and daring, saying in his letter, "Life is better, I find if you're not afraid to try new things. Like in the movie <u>Some Do</u> 'Some people prefer blackberries, some prefer strawberries, but everybody should try both.'" I'd never seen this movie but it was supposed to be an excellent movie and had gotten great reviews.

Here's a man, I told Maria, who's not afraid of trying new things. Who goes boldly into the unknown. I liked that, although I, myself, was a bit timid about life. But his letter had inspired me to live on the edge. Everyone should try both, I decided.

Later, when I returned his letter I didn't mention the fact that I had not yet seen the movie but simply said that he had aptly expressed my feelings about life. Then, caught in the spirit of adventure and boldness, I asked to meet him for lunch the next Friday at a well-known cafe.

When I received his brief but warm acceptance to my invitation I immediately ran out and rented <u>Some Do</u> and, loaded with popcorn, planted myself on Maria's couch to watch the movie.

It was the simple story of a young man, Ted, who had moved to a new town and was befriended by an older distinguished-looking man who visits the same gym as Ted. Half way through the movie, I began to grow uneasy, although about what I didn't know. I glanced at Maria and found her staring at the screen, eyes wide. Suddenly, I heard the line that Thomas had quoted in his letter. My eyes returned to the screen to find the older man eating a strawberry saying, "Some people like blackberries, some like strawberries, but everyone should try both." I watched horrified as he brought a strawberry slowly to his mouth, eyeing the young man seductively. The meaning was clear to me and to Maria who gasped, fumbled for the remote control, then shut off the movie.

I sat in silence, my mind racing back to his letter, the meaning now crystallized to me. Then I remembered my own letter; how I had gone to great lengths to give him the impression that I believed as he did. My horror was complete when I realized what he must have thought, and I had just turned to Maria to tell her that I didn't like both, when I noticed her head bent down, and her shoulders shaking. I couldn't believe it. She was laughing. She obviously found some humor in this turn of events, which was understandable as she was not directly involved. So I made her involved by declaring that she would come with me on Friday since this whole thing had been her idea, and that I would pick her up at 11:30 a.m. sharp. I slipped quickly out the door, giving her no chance for reply.

Friday morning dawned and I threw myself into the day, trying to forget the inevitable. Finally, 11 o'clock came and after picking up Maria, I headed for the cafe. My mind was completely blank and I couldn't even imagine what I might say to him. The whole situation seemed so unreal that, until I saw him sitting alone at a table, I actually thought it was merely a figment of my imagination, spurred on by too much monotony.

But there he was, smiling as he saw me coming. He was rather good-looking, more so than in his picture, and I found myself searching for alternate explanations of the blackberry/strawberry statement. He stood up, greeted

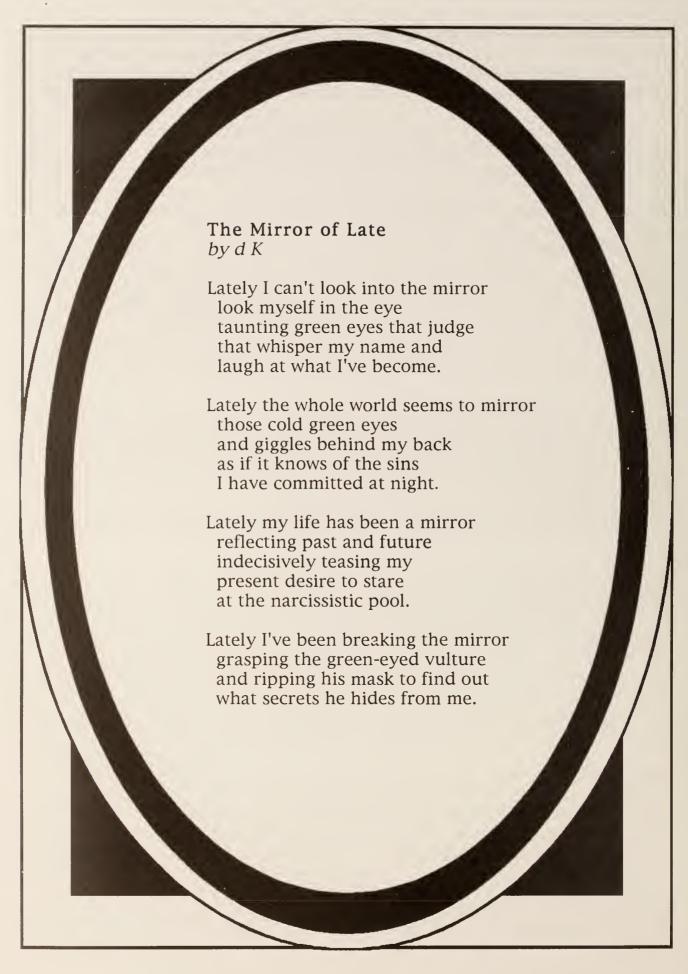
me warmly, murmured how-do-you-do to Maria when I introduced them, and then offered us chairs. Maria, I saw from the corner of my eye was unable to keep a wild, nervous gleam from her eye as if she expected him to at any moment leap up on the table with a strawberry in his mouth, quoting scenes from Some Do.

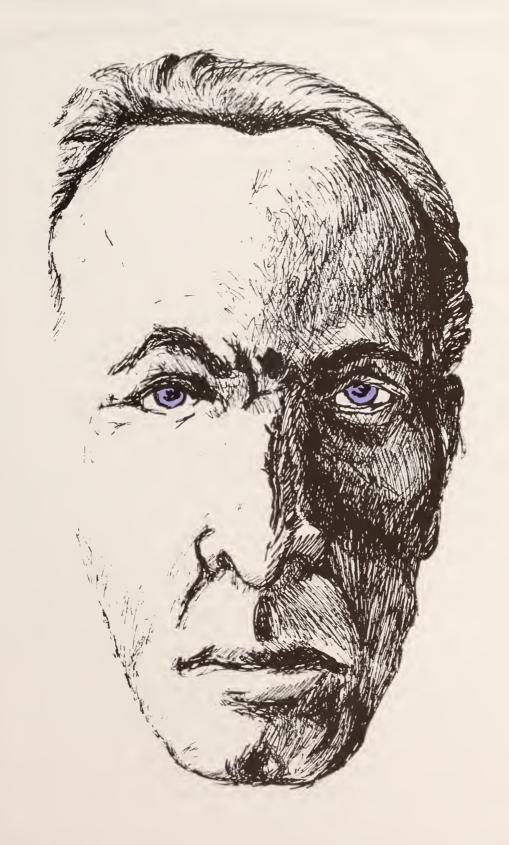
I decided to plunge in before she did something embarrassing, so with a deep breath I told him there was something I needed to clear up. He continued to smile as I fumbled around for words, stopping and starting, mentioning incoherently the movie and the differences of people, and other irrelevant things. I realized I was floundering in the deep water so I turned to Maria for help.

Without preamble she told him simply that I liked strawberries, only strawberries, and that I didn't care to try anything else. I stared at Maria, amazed at how effectively she had explained my situation. When I looked again at Thomas I found him looking thoughtfully at both Maria and me. Then he apologetically told me that he had not realized I was involved with someone, that he completely understood, these things happen, and he wished us the best of life. He stood then, said good-bye, and left us sitting in stunned silence.

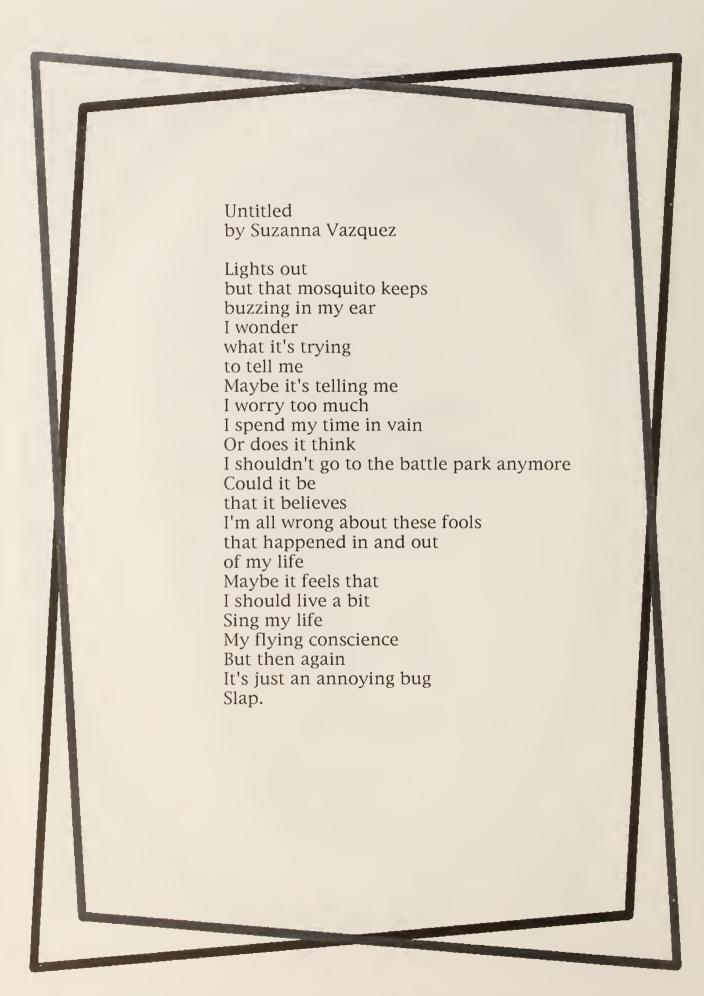
After a moment, to make sure I had heard right, I asked Maria just who he thought I was involved with. She confirmed my suspicions by saying yes, he thought she and I were "involved" and for the first time I questioned the wisdom of bringing Maria along. There was more stunned silence. But your wedding ring, I reminded her. Oh, that's easy to explain, she replied. So we're having an affair.

Blackberries, I told her then. You should have said I liked blackberries.





"Gaunt Face"-original ball-point sketch by Nathan Wood



Limitations by Peter Ryles

When I was young, I liked to curl up next to my mother as she quilted. Fascinated, I would peer at the fabric draped across her lap, guessing which stitch she would make next. It didn't matter to me that I never guessed right, for the unexpected stitch seemed to open new possibilities for the tiny patch of cloth. Could that little piece of yellow be a flower petal, or that round red circle a nose for a jolly little clown? Questions flooded me. Where did the patterns come from? How did she know where to stitch? For that matter, how does one stitch? Thus, my admiration for my mother grew, as well as my desire to learn. I wanted to quilt like my mother.

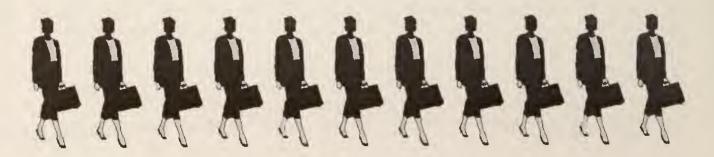
Wanting to know where my mother had learned to quilt, I listened entranced as my mother recounted how, not one woman, but many had taught her. She learned how to stitch from one lady, how to baste from another, and how to applique from still another. My mother commented that she would teach her daughters how to quilt, if she ever had any. This rich sense of tradition only further enticed me. Finally, I asked my mother if she would teach me. She frowned while my father, having overheard, laughed, as if I had unwittingly told the world's funniest joke. After I persisted in my demand, both quickly persuaded me that, because I was a boy, I should not learn how to quilt. Thus, I categorized quilting with dresses, dolls, and makeup -- something in the untouchable category of "girl things."

I didn't realize how much I believed in this category, though, until many years later, when working as a residential advisor for a summer program. In preparation for the camp, I received personal data sheets from the children for whom I would be responsible. Since I was most interested in the diversity of interests within the group, I began reading all of the children's hobbies. Nothing was notable, for many listed soccer or some other sport; but then I came across a sheet listing cross-stitching as a hobby. Immediately thinking I had received a female data sheet by accident, I looked at the sex of the sheet's author, finding "Peter" and "male" marked appropriately. Laughter filled my lungs, and echoed about the room.

I didn't keep it to myself, either. When arriving at the camp, the other residential advisors and I compared sheets, immediately declaring my "cross-stitcher" (a nickname that stuck among the residential advisors) the strangest and funniest camper among them all. We contemplated reasons for such an abnormality; offering humorous theories of homosexuality, as well as an overbearing mother. Eventually deciding upon nothing, we opted for laughter. The laughter filled my ears until, with sudden realization, it joined my father's laughter of many years before. My happiness and sarcasm quickly dissipated, replaced only by envy.

I was envious because the "cross-stitcher" broke away from societal standards by fulfilling his own wishes -- a feat I had yet to achieve. I had allowed myself to be limited by the societal standard of "femininity," as reinforced by my parents. Consequently, I never learned the art of quilting. Additionally,

my mother, having only sons, never taught one of her children. Regrettably, her wisdom, traditionally continued with each passing generation, will die with her. Moreover, by laughing at that poor child, I myself reinforced the societal standards of "femininity" for the other counselors. Now, I often think of that boy, and, rather than laughing, hope that he hasn't put aside his cross-stitching.



J.A. Malinski & Sons' by M. Katherine Malinski

My parents got a divorce when I was six and my father now lives in North Carolina, where he is remarried and works as a housing contractor. I see him from time to time, and the last time he gave me a hat. It is a hat from his business, and has "J.A. Malinski & Sons, Custom Homes, Additions" written on it. It is a nice hat, and I'm not usually one to question a gift, but I asked him why it said "& Sons"? "Well," he said, "I like the way it sounds. It conjures up an image of a stable, honest, hard-working family business." In actuality, none of his children are capable of assisting him in his work, but I can't help wondering why I am the only one excluded. Why does our society cherish the exclusively male union of father and sons above all else? The lightweight cap started to feel burdensome. It was because of the hat that I have started to question the society that encourages this unconscious discrimination.

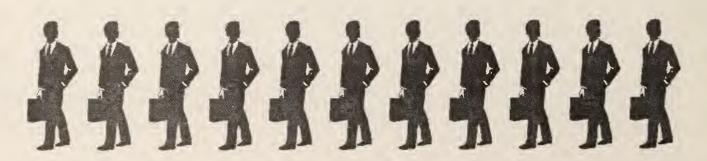
To figure out why I am excluded from the "hat family," I examined whom he did include. His two sons are Harry and Nick. Harry is his one-year-old son by Marissa, his current wife; Nick is Marissa's seven-year-old son by another marriage. It seems unlikely that he would exclude me because I am a child of a different wife, since he included another man's son. It can't be because I am too far away, because Nick lives with his dad in the Philippines and my father has never met him. Ability could have nothing to do with it, because I can obviously do better manual labor than a one-year-old. So what is the uncommon variable? The choice that is obvious to me is gender. I am his firstborn, but I don't count, because I am female.

In ancient China, newborn babies were sometimes killed if they were female. That culture believed that women contributed nothing useful to the family, and thus were not even worth allowing to live. Even amidst all the social change of the French Revolution, in the "Declarations of the Rights of Man and the Citizen," *man* did not mean *human*. Women were excluded, purposefully and consciously. I've been aware that women were looked upon this way in past centuries and different cultures, but I never expected to find these attitudes today, affecting my life. I am not suggesting that a woman's worth in our culture is as it was in ancient China, but women are still perceived differently. It is sometimes argued that there is nothing wrong with viewing women differently from men, since there are some biological differences. However, the ability to be a part of the family construction business is not governed by biology.

So, what can I do about it? Charlotte Gilman's narrator in The Yellow Wallpaper dealt with her chauvinistic husband and the androantric society of the nineteenth century by going insane. When Kate Chopin's Louise Mallard learns that her husband, in actuality, is not dead, but instead is still around to run her life, she has a heart attack and dies. I don't find either one of those solutions very helpful. But Adrienne Rich, in her essay "Claiming an Education," shows me a plausible way to deal with these repressive cultural forces. When she asserts "you cannot afford to think of being here to receive an education, you will do much better to think of yourselves as being here to claim one," she

tells me that I cannot continue simply to expect to receive the same treatment that my brothers get. I think that even though she is speaking about education, she could just as easily be talking about respect. She reminds me that I must work for and claim my respect. My father may have chosen not to include me on the front of the hat, but Rich insists that it is I who must do some thing about it. I can no longer afford to assume that what is given to some will be given to all.

I have not discovered society's reasons for cherishing father/son relationships; I probably never will. What I have done is important; I've begun to claim my respect. This summer I went with my church youth group to San Marcos, Texas, and spent a week working at a mission camp. A work camp. A construction work camp. I even worked in a group consisting of only women. We not only painted a house, we removed its old roof and put a new one on. I wore my father's hat the whole time. Although it is just a simple baseball cap, I will keep it for the rest of my life. After all, the Malinski & Sons' hat now has tar and paint stains on it that were put there by Malinski's daughter.





The Healing Song by Susan Lewis

I'll not be ashamed

That I have breasts and hips and a belly.

I'll not be ashamed

That my body curves and dips then swells.

I'll not be ashamed

That as I walk my body sways and calls the wind

I'll not be ashamed

That my hair curls softly at the curve of my neck.

I'll not be ashamed

That my eyes are soft and my mouth sensual.

I'll not be ashamed

That my voice is lilting and honeyed.

I'll not be ashamed

That my laughter rides atop the wings of birds.

I'll not be ashamed

That my love comes rushing and spilling forth

To water the dry ground.

I'll not be ashamed



DOUBLE BUNDUNGS

by Rob Show

Our society has an image of the ideal human body, an ideal which, realistically, most of us can never reach. In <u>The Woman Warrior</u>, Maxine Hong Kingston struggles with a similar ideal, the Chinese ideal of the perfect woman. For the Chinese, the ideal woman possesses the straight

back of the goddess and the physical power and independence of the warrior. Yet, Chinese society enforces the opposite, giving women the bent back of the slave and the dependency and weakness of a footbound wife. In <u>The Woman Warrior</u>, women are valued only if they possess qualities which they, paradoxically, are discouraged and prevented from achieving.

Kingston first became aware of the ideal during childhood. As she states:

[W]e learned that we failed if we grew up to be wives or slaves. We could be heroines, swordswomen. Even if she had to rage across all China, a swordswoman got even with anybody who hurt her family. (Kingston 19)

The ideal woman is embodied by the swordswoman, a powerful and independent creature. This confuses Kingston, for Chinese society enforces weakness, dependence, and servitude for women, contradicting the woman warrior ideal. Thus, when Kingston imagines the transformation required to become a woman warrior, she envisions that one must first leave Chinese society, escaping its contradictory norms.

Chinese society enforces its contradictory norms on various manners. The very work women perform in Chinese society prevents them from attaining the ideal. Kingston states:

Women looked like great sea snails--the corded wood, babies, and laundry they carried were the whorls on their backs. The Chinese did not admire a bent back; goddesses and warriors stood straight. Still there must have been a marvelous freeing of beauty when a worker laid down her burden and stretched and arched. (Kingston 10)

Women unable to attain the straight back of the goddess or warrior are not admirable. Yet, forced to work in such a manner, they could not possibly attain such an ideal.

The independence of the woman warrior could not possibly be achieved as well, for women are inherently slaves to their husbands and to society. Chi-

nese language reinforces this idea, for as Kingston points out, "There is a Chinese word for the female *I* --which means 'slave.' Break the women with their own tongues!" Rather, women are taught to be dependent.

Chinese society teaches that to be supported is to be loved. Thus, Kingston laments that she is not dependent on someone:

Nobody supports me at the expense of his own adventure. Then I get bitter: no one supports me; I am not loved enough to be supported. That I am not a burden has to compensate for the sad envy when I look at women loved enough to be supported. Even now China wraps double binds around my feet. (Kingston 48)

Kingston recognizes the inhibition that the need for dependence causes by alluding to the dependence-causing act of foot binding. In "Gynocide: Chinese Foot Binding," Andrea Dworkin points out that foot binding was once used by the Chinese to enforce passivity and dependence in women:

Thin, small, curved, soft, fragrant, weak, easily inflamed, passive to the point of being almost inanimate--this was footbound woman....Even the imagery of the names of various types of foot suggest, on the one hand, feminine passivity (lotuses, lilies, bamboo shoots, water chestnuts) on the other hand, male independence, strength and mobility (lotus boats, large-footed crows, monkey foot). (Dworkin 65)

The weak dependent footbound woman directly contradicts the image of the woman warrior. Kingston herself compares the two within the novel, when imagining herself as a woman warrior:

When I broke down the door, I found women, cowering, whimpering women. I heard the shrill insect noises and scurrying. They blinked weakly at me like pheasants that have been raised in the dark for soft meat. The servants who walked the ladies had abandoned them, and they could not escape their bound feet. Some crawled away from me, using their elbows to pull themselves along. These women would not be good for anything. (Kingston 44)

Here, Kingston contrasts the image of the woman warrior and the dependent footbound woman. The woman warrior breaks open the door, whereas the footbound women, dependent on servants, cannot even walk, much less run in fear. The women are like insects, to be crushed underfoot, and like pheasants, to be manipulated and raised for someone else's purposes. Yet, Chinese society encourages women to become like the footbound woman, totally and ut-

terly dependent.

The dependent and weak nature of the footbound woman opposes the independent and strong nature of the woman warrior. Chinese society teaches women that they fail if they become the footbound woman and succeed if they become the woman warrior. Yet, women are doomed to fail and doomed to no self-esteem, for they cannot attain the independence and strength of the swordswoman. At every level of society, women are encouraged to be dependent and weak, a symbolic binding of feet. And, with every double bind, women become farther from attaining the woman warrior ideal.

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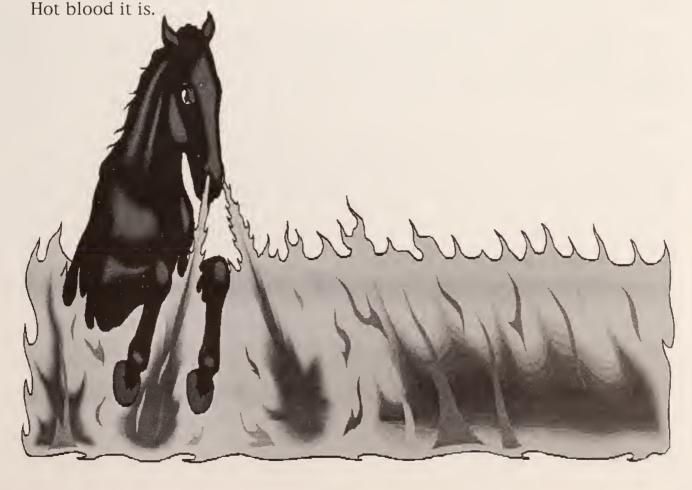
Wild-Horse Hearts: A Letter to My Son by Susan Lewis

"It's in their blood," the old woman said;
"You can't stop it, don't even try."
And she was right.
My blood is his blood and
Hot blood it is.

From the very first flicker He tickled against my ribs, I knew that he was mine.

I knew that we would sidle and kick up dirt and make noise. I knew that they would never break us. I knew that we would stamp and rear at The first slap of the blanket against the sky and rush the gate.

I knew that we would prance and snort and Dance sideways, then backwards To the beat of our wild-horse hearts. I knew, because My blood is his blood and



Shortcut

by Ronald M. Rachal

One warm spring day, in late May or thereabout, three wayward, bold and intrepid explorers found themselves hiking along an unfamiliar footpath. A traveling merchant, weathered and crusty, her leathery skin showing the many miles she had set behind her, had told them of the path when they had made known their desire for a shorter way to the city than the rutted wagon trail they had been following all morning. The old woman had explained that there was a long and winding thing with many rises, dips, and meanders, but that it would lead to town in half the time as the wagon trail.

As the three were about to turn in favor of this new route, the wizened crone had held up a warning finger and advised, ever so sternly, that the path was divided by a defile twenty yards across and many hundreds of feet deep. She said that the chasm was spanned by a narrow board-and-rope bridge. Warningly, her eyes sparkling with glimmering intensity, the aged one cautioned that the swaying, dangerous bridge was guarded by a mischievous donkey.

Bravely, the three men laughed and slapped one another on the back. Rope bridges were mere stepping stones to men who had climbed the sheer faces of mountains. And a donkey? Why, what was a donkey compared with the bears and cougars they had laid low?

Still, as the men turned and started away, the old woman shouted at their backs, "Beware the donkey!"

If the footpath was a shortcut to the nearest town, it didn't seem that way to the three men. Instead of winding around steep hills, the path arched over them. It looped and curled like a writhing snake with stomach cramps. After less than an hour, the men regretted having been so quick to take the "faster" way. They swore up and down that this was the last time any of them would accept the half-baked advice of a total stranger at face value.

Another hour passed, then another. At last they rounded a bend where, in the near distance, a deep cavity yawned wide in the earth, a crevasses just as the old woman had described. Where the path terminated at the verge of the chasm, there hung a rickety looking rope suspension bridge connecting the two sides. The bridge looked frail. It sagged like spaghetti. The intertwining ropes holding it together were frayed. The boards making up the deck of the span were gray with age.

Staring in disgust and feeling pangs of trepidation, the men contemplated turning right around and going back the way they had come. No one, however, was anxious to make that long trek back, over those steep hills and along that serpentine path. They agreed among themselves that when the bridge was crossed, the worst of the hike would surely be behind them. The rest of the way would be as easy as falling off a log.

Their spirits bolstered by their impeccable logic, the men strode boldly forward, their hearts set on conquering this small obstacle.

Before they reached the foot of the bridge, their bravado and bluster were cut short.

Ten yards away from the edge of the divide, the men were confronted by a donkey. Standing only as high as a small Mexican burro, the animal trotted out from behind a low hedge to intercept the men. Its coat was grey and smooth, its main and tail bushy and disheveled. It was very plump about the middle. Its round brown eyes glittered playfully. By and large, it appeared to be a most unimpressive creature.

When it reached the tethered end of the bridge the donkey posted itself before the rope-entwined entry, squarely blocking the way. When the men were ten feet away, this unimpressive donkey performed a most impressive feat: it spoke.

"Stop," said the donkey. Its voice was high and piercing and filled with a braying, nasal, horsey whine. "Go back or be tested. The decision is yours."

The men were taken aback. Although they had grown up watching television programs which depicted animals and inanimate objects speaking (dogs, cats, horses, and even cars), they could never have imagined that one day they might be confronted, much less given an ultimatum, by one. Unaccustomed to taking orders from animals and feeling less than agreeable as a result of their wayward trek, the men were determined to cross the bridge.

"Move aside," said one man, waving his hands at the donkey to shoo it away.

Instead of stepping aside, the donkey bucked and kicked. Angry sparks spat from beneath its tiny, sharp hoofs as they clattered and scratched the stony ground. In spite of its hefty girth, the donkey was very fleet of hoof. The donkey squinted its eyes warningly. Its muscles were tensed like steel bands beneath its gray coat.

The men were shocked by the donkey's unexpected show of aggression. They stepped back quickly to give the animal room to vent its temper.

Regaining its composure, the donkey once more braced its hoofs wide apart and guarded the bridge. Again it warned, "Go back or be tested. The decision is yours."

Huddling together to confer, the men were in abject agreement that they had no desire to take the long, hard journey back the way they had come. Turning to speak to the donkey, the first man, holding up his open hands in a gesture of harmlessness, said, "We don't want to go back. Could you tell us more about this test?"

Relaxing somewhat, but remaining on his guard, the donkey flicked its long ears from side to side and said, "To pass, each one of you must prepare a meal for me then kiss me on my nose. If I am satisfied, you will suffer the consequences. Is it so agreed?"

Once more, the men huddled. Each felt himself immensely superior to a donkey. They agreed to the animal's terms.

Tempted by the chance to be the first man to win his way across to the far side of the ravine, one of the men opened his knapsack and whipped up a peanut butter and grape jelly sandwich on whole wheat bread. Stepping briskly forward, he presented his offering to the donkey.

Turning its head his way and that, the donkey looked at the food and sniffed it. Finding it appealing, the creature scooped the sandwich up between

its rubbery lips, flipped it into the air, and caught it in its mouth. In less than a wink of a second the food was in the donkey's belly.

Smacking its lips, the donkey said, "That was quite tasty, but not very original." Without another word, the donkey stepped forward and grasped the man's belt between its teeth. Effortlessly, the animal jerked its head and flung the man over the edge of the precipice.

When the first man's fading screams came to a sudden end, the donkey looked at the remaining two men and asked, "Who will be next?"

Knowing that he could do much better than a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, the second man strutted forward. Unfastening his knapsack with a flourish, he deftly put ham, cheese, mustard, pickles, lettuce, and tomatoes together on white bread. When he was finished he had prepared a glorious, multi-decker ham and cheese sandwich. His eyes brimming with pride, the second man presented his creation to the donkey.

Curious, the donkey craned its neck out and sniffed the offering. Its floppy ears waggled back and forth as it appraised the second man's presentation. Teasing itself, the donkey nuzzled the sandwich with it's nose. Then, it scooped the feast up onto its long pink tongue and let it slide down its gullet. The donkey's eyes sparkled with delight. "That was very good. Divine enough to warrant passage," it said. "You may now kiss my nose." The donkey extended its long head outward and lifted its gray-whiskered muzzle to the second man.

Laughing because he had passed the test, the man stooped and gave the donkey a quick peck on the nose. Then he waved to the third man and set off toward the footbridge.

Before the second man reached the swaying umbilical, however, the donkey brayed, "You call that a kiss?" As quick as a flash, it clattered across the hard ground and kicked the second man in the seat of his pants, sending him sailing out over the ledge and into the crevasse.

With the scalding siren sound of horrified screams still ringing his ears, the third man, the last, found himself in the throes of a dilemma. On the one hand he wanted very much to turn tail and run away from the donkey as quickly as his feet could carry him. On the other hand, every instinct told him that he could succeed where his companions had failed.

When the third man didn't immediately make his bid for permission to pass, the donkey, as if it possessed all the patience in the world, asked, "Do you wish to cross?" It scratched the ground with the toe of a hoof, scattering flaming threads of sparks.

Not one to let a challenge go untested, the third man nodded. "Yes, I will try," he said.

Though his friends had failed, the third man was filled with confidence. When his companions had set about making their offerings for the donkey, he had nearly burst out laughing. A peanut butter and jelly sandwich and a ham and cheese sandwich for goodness sake! How mundane! The third man knew for a certainty that he could do better, and he set about doing just that.

Working as if his life depended on it, the third man built a small fire of twigs and sticks. He produced a thick slice of roast beef and a wedge of Swiss

cheese from his knapsack. With practiced ease, he sliced the beef painstakingly wafer thin. Compelling himself to work with utmost patience, he delicately laid the beef and a half dozen golden-yellow slices of Swiss on a bed of pumpernickel. Smiling, he spooned on a generous dollop of spicy brown mustard to give the sandwich a lively tang.

The heady aroma wafting from the deli sandwich was heavenly, taste tempting. Daring the donkey to snub his creation, the third man marched

boldly forward and held out the delicacy for the animal's approval.

As it had done twice before, the donkey stepped forward to examine the offering. It dilated its nostrils and inhaled the tantalizing aroma. Its ears cocked back and forth with growing interest. Having teased its taste buds enough, it leaned forward and ate. This time, instead of gobbling its meal, the donkey chewed slowly, savoring every tasty nuance of the deli roast beef and Swiss.

When at last it swallowed, the donkey looked at the man wearing an appreciative gaze. "That was truly marvelous," it said. "The best I've tasted in the longest of times." Before the third man was given time to let the compliment go to his head, the donkey said, "Now you may kiss me."

Vividly, the third man recalled the fate of the second man. Determined not to allow the same tragedy to befall him, the third man puckered up an gave the donkey a long linguing wat smack on its soft, sold nose

the donkey a long, lingering, wet smack on its soft, cold nose.

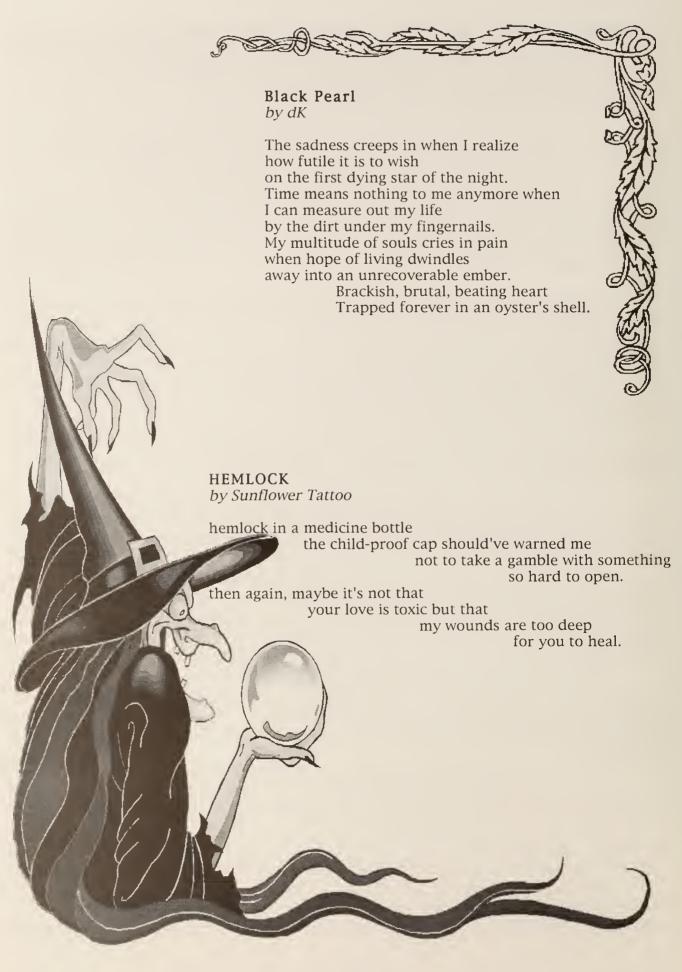
When the man finally broke his kiss and stepped back, the donkey said, "You have done well. You may pass." Gracefully, the donkey stepped to one side, opening the way to the footbridge.

The man's heart swelled with pride. He drew himself erect, a man who had mastered a cunning adversary with his own skill and force of will. Breathing deeply, relishing his success the man strode proudly to the foot of the bridge and started across.

When the man was less than halfway to the other side of the gorge, the donkey on spritely hooves, turned, grasped the bridge's ropes between his teeth, and shook the flimsy structure with all its might. Caught unprepared by the swift attack, the man lost his footing and his grip. Whipped over the side, he fell kicking and screaming to the jagged rocks far below.

In the new silence of the day the donkey nodded its head and flipped its tousled mane, its eyes aglow with satisfaction. It licked its lips and burped. Gazing over the edge of the precipice, its long ears waggling back and forth, it brayed raucously, "Never expect to be rewarded for feeding temptation and kissing ass!"

Then the devilish donkey pranced lightly across the rocky ground and hid behind the bushes at the turn in the winding trail to await the arrival of more wandering folk in search of a shortcut.





"Watch the Dragon Burn"-original pencil drawing by Mark Kapera

<u>Dracula</u>: noitanigamI nairotciV ehT by Robert Nehlig

This time there could be no error, for the man was close to me, and I could see him over my shoulder. But there was no reflection of him in the mirror! The whole room behind me was displayed; but there was no sign of a man in it, except myself.

I know that from my glass. Do you ever try to read your own face? I do, and I can tell you it is not a bad study, and gives you more trouble than you can well fancy

At several places in Bram Stoker's <u>Dracula</u>, we find the characters examining themselves. These are quite simple glances that the characters take. Stoker, however, is placing before the Victorian readers, as well as other readers, a mirror with which to see themselves as a race, as a nation, as a civilized people, as sexual beings, as religious followers, and as individuals within these groups. Although the list is long, this illustrates exactly how difficult it is to find one's identity in the myriad forces at work in the Victorian world. Stoker uses Gothic devices and numerous elements of vampire lore as tools to dissect the Victorian identity, and readers find themselves as squeamish as they would watching the pathologist's dissection.

Preservation of racial identity is of great concern to an imperial nation such as Victorian England. Victorians feared losing their racial identity through infiltration by foreigners such as the Irish (interesting enough Stoker is Irish), Indians, Gypsies (Behlmer), Eastern Europeans (such as the count himself), Jews, and South Africans. Foreigners are an increasing fear as travel becomes easier and the Empire grows, for the English are forced into more contact with them, the "Other," in the mainland and in the colonies.

The numerous speeches in the House of Commons over India, including those of Thomas Macaulay (10 July 1833) and John Bright (24 June 1858), are symptoms of the racial tensions that are emerging and growing during the early to middle years of the period. Macaulay, for example, was attempting to overcome a prevailing national fear of allowing Indian natives, foreigners, into "high civil and military office."

The fear of the foreign appears numerous times in the literature of the Victorian Period. Beginning with such novels as <u>Wuthering Heights</u>, where Heathcliff is a highly disruptive force from afar. Bronte makes much of his dark complexion as a part of his threatening appearance. "Invasion scare" and "dynamite" novels are of great popularity during the Victorian Period (Arata 623). This fear of the foreign culminates in the latter part of the period--

The Invasion of England, Sir W. F. Butler's title for his 1892 novel, describes the subject matter, overt or displaced of hundreds of late-Victorian fictions, all of them concerned with the potential overthrow of the nation by outsiders. (Arata 624)

One of the major concerns about the foreigners at this time is well illustrated and played upon in <u>Dracula</u> itself. The locale Stoker chooses for the beginning and end of the novel is perfect testimony of the racial tension and threat that Dracula represents as a Transylvanian.

Transylvania was known primarily as a part of the vexed Eastern Question that so obsessed British foreign policy in the 1880's and 90's. The region was first and foremost the site not of superstition and Gothic romance but of political turbulence and racial strife. (Arata 626)

E. M. Forster's <u>Howard's End</u> is a perfect example of a late-Victorian novel which illustrates this particular racial tension. The novel centers around the conflict of an English family and a German family, and references are made continually to what it is to be of either nationality or which nationality has the better culture-- "Frieda, you despise English music. You know you

do. And English art. And English literature, except Shakespeare and he's a German" (Forster 37).

This "Eastern [European] Question" continued to concern the British even as they entered the next century. In 1905 Joseph Chamberlain says, in reference to the British Empire, "It is not an empire in the same sense in which the German Empire now dominates a great portion of Europe" (Mass Politics 556). Although Chamberlain is not directly addressing the growing threat of the German Empire to England in this quote, he does acknowledge it. In the same speech, he suggests that Britain is merely a fledgling empire-- "my countrymen are only just beginning" --and weak to the point of vulnerability, for it is bound by "a tie, after all, so slender that a rough blow might shatter it and dissolve it" (Mass Politics 556).

The vampire myth lends itself very well to personifying the fears of racial imagery. "As John Allen Stevenson, if 'blood' is a sign of racial identity then Dracula effectively deracinates his victims" (Arata 630). There can be little doubt that Dracula is a force threatening racial identity.

When Jonathan Harker visits Castle Dracula, the count tells of his own race (?):

We Szekelys have a right to be proud, for in our veins flows the blood of many brave races...Is it a wonder that we were a conquering race; that we are proud....(Dracula 27)

Jonathan soon finds that Dracula intends to continue his people's tradition of conquering.

This blood imagery, of course, continues throughout the book. Jonathan and Mina's son, mentioned in the Note at the end of the novel, is named after the handful of men involved in the destruction of the vampire. One name surely left out was the vampire's own son. The child was descended more truly through the blood from the vampire, due to the exchange of blood between Mina and Dracula earlier in the book (Dracula 262). This is an interesting example of how the English racial identity is infiltrated by foreign blood (Arata 632).

When Lucy needs a transfusion, it is decided that Dr. Seward will be the one to give the needed blood. Seward is chosen because he is "younger and stronger" (Dracula 113). Considering, however, that Van Helsing shows no lack of vigor at other places in the novel (he is charged with protecting Mina in Transylvania) and Seward himself later comments on Van Helsing's "iron strength" (Dracula 162); perhaps, Van Helsing was not chosen because he is a foreigner (Arata 632).

The Victorians not only feared the loss of their racial identity but they also feared the threat to civilization that these foreigners posed. "The fear is that what has been represented as the 'civilized' world is on the point of being colonized by 'primitive' forces" (Arata 622). The gypsies in Dracula is one representation of these "'primitive' forces." Dracula himself, even in death, maintains a health and vigor that is often attributed to the gypsies.

Vampires and gypsies both conjured up images for the Victorian of incomprehensible forces at work. "The primitive and the occultist alike operated beyond or beneath the threshold of the 'civilized' rational mind, tapping into primal energies and unconscious resources as well as into deep-rooted anxieties and fears" (Arata 624). The mere existence of such forces in a world where 'man has conquered his environment' through industrialization balks the Victorians' trust in science and reason.

Jonathan establishes his diary as a bastion of reason in a place where reason has failed to explain his fears-- "Let me begin with facts--bare, meagre facts, verified by books and figures, and of which there can be no doubt" (Dracula 28). His diary is the last remnant he has of the world he could understand through reason and control through the devices of civilization. The attachment to "facts" as opposed to "experience" is a timely reflection of the putting aside of "theorizing" and "deductive procedure" in favor of "empiricism" and "scientific method" among the scientifically minded (Altick 259).

His diary "is nineteenth century up-to-date with a vengeance. And yet unless my senses deceive me, the old centuries had, and have, powers of their own which mere 'modernity' cannot kill" (Dracula 34). And even the realization that these "powers" are beyond the control of "modernity," Jonathan still seeks solace in his diary--

Up to now I never quite knew what Shakespeare meant when he made Hamlet say:--

"My tablets! quick my tablets!

'Tis meet that I put it down," etc.,

for now feeling as though my own brain were unhinged or as if the shock had come which must end in its undoing, I turn to my diary for repose. The habit of entering accurately must help to soothe me. (Dracula 34, emphasis mine)

and in books--"I had spent the day wearily over books, and, simply to keep my mind occupied, went over some matters I had been examined in at Lincoln's Inn" (Dracula 29).

Jonathan Harker was not an unlikely Victorian Englishman. It is noteworthy that the two characters who know the most about vampires were not from England—the American Quincey Morris (the first novel to even mention the word "vampire," Arata) and Abraham Van Helsing from Amsterdam. England's acceptance of the doctrines of reason and science was increasingly rapidly, even among the lower classes, for it was becoming a part of everyday life. As Richard Altick says, because of science, "their conquests would be ever more glorious and man's control of his environment the firmer and more profitable" (Altick 259). Science was now intimately tied with imperialism and the market, two things of which at least one affected most everyone, in not everyone, in England on a daily basis.

Another point worth noting in the text is that two of the men involved in the destruction of the vampire are men of science, doctors of medicine. Neither of these two men take part in the actual destruction, but stand nearby holding Winchesters while those actually destroying the vampire wield knives.

Civilization has become apart of the Victorian identity, like being a doctor is part of an identity-- Van Helsing ends the list of credentials after his name with "etc." Simply because the Victorians place their faith and trust in civilization does it exist as part of their identity.

While civilization is a relatively new and developing part of identity, sexual roles have been around for quite some time. Problems, hence, are that much more intense. The sexes had their role laid out for them, and people were valued on their ability to play that role.

The Victorian middle-class man spent " a hard day at competing in the business jungle, reigned as lord and master at table and fire-side" (Altick 53). The aristocratic man surely had an easier day at work or play, but still "reigned as lord."

The aristocratic woman, on the other hand, was attached to the household which required of her "decorative" skills-- "the needlework, making boxes from shells collected at the seaside, sketching and watercolor painting, flower arrangement, strumming at the piano or harp...charity...round of balls, 'at homes,' and dinner parties" (Altick 52). The Victorian middle-class woman was "a devoted (and submissive) wife and mother of often all too many children" (Altick 53). In either case, the woman's place is "in the home, on a veritable pedestal if one could be afforded, and emphatically not in the world of affairs," for "by the beginning of the nineteenth century the powerful concept of 'refinement' prescribed that all women outside the working class abstain from gainful employment except in cases of extreme necessity" (Altick 51). This "concept" applies to all the main female characters in the novel.

To the Victorian, these roles are part of the stable identity, and as much a part of the "basic order of things" as God's existence or the accuracy of reason:

The androgyne fails in the Gothic fantasy because the nature of the masculine and feminine archetypes and the characters attachment to those archetypes make any alternative a threat to the security of male and female identities. (Day 132)

The king in Tennyson's <u>The Princess</u> says it best:

but this is fixt

As are the roots of earth and base of all; Man for the field and woman for the hearth; Man for the sword and the needle she; Man with the head and woman with the heart; Man to command and woman to obey; All else is confusion.

These are the views the Victorian holds sacred in dealing with sexual roles, and these are the values that Dracula threatens.

Dracula's vampire lovers at the Castle Dracula threaten Jonathan's sexual identity as male when they attempt to "penetrate" him with their teeth. Their desire for him, while appearing as women, deprive him of his role as executor of the act of sex. The woman's role is to resist outside of marriage, and the man's to overcome the woman's resistance (Marcus). His fear of them as threats to his sexuality is obvious, for he is more afraid of these women than Dracula himself. Several times he goes to the Count's resting place in an attempt to destroy him, and, yet, he merely shrinks from the women in fear.

Dracula deprives both Mina and Lucy of their sexual identities as "pure" wives. "When the Host touches [Mina's] forehead, her flesh is seared, for she is, by her own words, 'unclean'" (Day 147). After Dracula's attack, Lucy can no longer fulfill her role as wife not only because she is then impure but also because she was becoming a vampire, an androgynous creature in itself, and something to be destroyed-- Van Helsing says, "he will want to see her-- to see it" (Dracula 154, emphasis Stoker's). Of course, then the men are placed in the position of needing to destroy her, as Van Helsing instructs, and are no longer fulfilling the role as the protectors of women. Van Helsing speaks of this role, "the very instinct of man in me, which calls some of my sex to love and protect one of hers, made my heart whirl with new emotion" (Dracula 346). Van Helsing also points out that if Arthur is married to Lucy through blood transfusion (Dracula 162), then Lucy is a polyandrist, for the others were also married to her as they had their blood transfused into hers (Dracula 164).

The Victorians feared that the breakdown of sexual roles would lead to promiscuity. Without defined roles, the Victorians thought that people would become androgynes. Androgyny would cause the institution of marriage to be dysfunctional, allowing uninhibited sex, and remove the limit prohibiting choosing partners from both sexes, allowing unlimited choices in partners.

Promiscuity was of special concern considering the belief that each time someone had sex (successfully, that is!) that person suffered a loss of fluid, "spending." When "semen becomes a metaphor for all the fluids of the body, including the original one by which we are nourished" (Marcus 243), it appears that with each "spending" one is losing vitality and potency.

Potency is, of course, of great importance, especially to the male who feels responsible for all the necessary things in life--making money, running the government, and fighting for the country. Remembering that women served a less necessary "decorative" role, we must also understand that if a Victorian were to accept the breakdown of sexual roles, he would still believe that "the female brain was not equal to the demands of commerce or the professions" (Altick 54). The belief in the necessity of the sexual roles runs deep in the Victorian identity.

The British empire, a symbol of the nation's potency to many Victorians and one of the man's domains, is being seen to crumble by many during the Period, especially the latter part.

Late-Victorian fiction in particular is saturated with the sense that the entire nation-as a race of people, as a political and imperial force, as a social and cultural power-was in irretrievable decline (Arata 622).

There are several fears associated with this larger fear of imperial decline. The first has to do with the very important and previously mentioned Eastern Question. The events of the later World Wars are the results of situations developing during the Victorian Period. These situations are visible at the time and threaten the Victorians even then. The English were aware of

the development of countries in Eastern Europe and of America's progress, and the potential imperial urges that come with this progress, and the potential imperial urges that come with this progress are frightening to England that is beginning to have troubles maintaining its empire as it enters the twentieth century.

The context [of <u>Dracula</u>] includes the decline of Britain as a world power at the close of the nineteenth century; or rather the way the perception of that decline was articulated by contemporary artists (Arata 622).

The graveyard that Mina is sitting in when she begins her diary has numerous graves of soldiers and sailors who fought for the sake of the Empire. As the old man tells Mina, these graves are the graves of men who died in foreign places; in other words, fighting battles of imperial conquest (<u>Dracula</u> 62). This same graveyard, Mina tells us earlier, is falling into the sea--"part of the bank has fallen away and some of the graves have been destroyed" (<u>Dracula</u> 59). This gives the impression of imperial decay.

The second problem involves the rebellion of the colonies. The Victorians fear that dissatisfaction with England is growing in the colonized peoples. "When that ill will erupted into violence, as it did in the 1882 Phoenix Park murders Victorian readers could see up close and in sharp focus the potential consequences of imperial domination" (Arata 633). And as Arata goes on to point out, "For Stoker's audience, Dracula's invasion of Britain would conceivably have aroused seldom dormant fears of an Irish uprising" (Arata 633).

Stoker has truly created a horrifying reflection of the Victorian psyche. What is horrifying about Dracula is not that he is a powerful and evil monster come to prey on some unfortunate characters in a book, but the true horror comes from the devastating fear of Dracula's threat to all the values that the Victorians hold dear.

Indeed, the Count can threaten the integrity of the

nation precisely because of the nature of his threat to personal integrity. His attacks involve, more than assault on the isolated shelf, the subversion and loss of one's individual identity (Arata 630).

Yet, Dracula's powers as a vampire to destroy the identity are only a part of the terrific horror of the story. Jonathan Harker looks into the mirror expecting to see Dracula, but only sees himself. Several times Jonathan sees Dracula going to the nearby Transylvanian town in Jonathan's own English clothes. The woman screams, "Monster, give me my child!" (Dracula 43) is speaking to Jonathan. Mina and Lucy haunt a graveyard, by day, of course, before the vampire even reaches England. The Victorians fear that they are Dracula. Like Stevenson's Jekyll, they find the monstrosity they fear within themselves. Like Victor Frankenstein, they have created a monster and have come to look like it.

The Victorian British empire was seen to be in decline, but toward the latter part of the period, the Victorians began to realize also the monstrosity of the Empire. The Empire was moving forward at the expense of domestic situations. William Booth addresses this concern in the almost Gothic "Why Darkest England?" which compares England's slums to the dense jungle of Africa --

But while brooding over the awful presentation of life as it exists in the vast African forest, it seemed to me only too vivid a picture of many parts of our own land.

As there is a Darkest Africa is there not also a Darkest England?

(Booth 145)

Also evident in Booth's essay is the concern that the imperial domination is wrong --

They exploit the domestic affections of the forest dwellers

in order to strip them of all they possess in the world. That has been going on for years. It is going on today. It has come to be regarded as the natural normal law of existence (Booth 145).

When reading Booth's article in its entirety, one cannot but help getting the sense that the English have allowed the monster Empire to begin "colonizing" England's own people.

Although <u>Dracula</u> helps to relieve the mind of guilt -- "As fantasies, these narratives

Although <u>Dracula</u> helps to relieve the mind of guilt -- "As fantasies, these narratives provide an opportunity to atone for imperial sins. . ." (Arata 623), the fear of being a monstrosity is still there.

Monstrosity is also what the Victorian sees in the androgyne. The Victorian knows the sexual roles, and as we have already seen, these roles are an unalterable part of the natural way things work in the world. The Victorian is convinced that the basis for the sexual roles was set up by the Maker and is a physiological fact. An androgyne, from the perspective that this mentality provides, is a monster. William Day writes about the androgyne in Gothic literature -- the characters become lost in the underworld, they see the androgyne as monstrous and threatening, something essentially nonhuman. They perceive it this way because of their own warped conception of themselves; through the fractured lens of their identities, they can see only images of the grotesque (Day 132).

Some of the reasons the Victorians feared that the breakdown of sexual roles was at hand included the entrance of the woman into the work place, the new feminist sentiments in literature and other publications, and the concept of the "new woman" (Altick 58-59).

These new advancements and the rapid change taking place are part of the split feelings about civilization. On the one hand, the progress of a society is a value that has come to be highly prized to the Victorians. Yet, the results of civilization are monstrous like Dracula. Being "civilized" is part of the Victorian identity, but civilization often deprives people of their identity as people. They become machines -- "By the engine stood a dark motionless being, a sooty and grimy embodiment of tallness, in sort of a trance, with a heap of coals by his side: it was the engine-man" (Hardy 404) -- and they become the "mindless" slaves that toil in the factory. The people become like walking corpses similar to the vampire -- "only the ghastly devastation is covered, corpselike, with the artificialities and hypocrises of modern civilisation" (Booth 147). The Victorians feel that as a "civilized" people they are more like the vampire who they consider "uncivilized."

Although Dracula is viewed as uncivilized, he claims to have blood of many great races in his veins. These races may have been "civilized to varied degrees," but a certain amount of sophistication must have been attained to have achieved this greatness. The Victorians fear that they, like Dracula, have impure blood. Dracula has no racial definition, he is the descendent of a multitude of peoples, and yet his race is never mentioned in the book. There is no doubt of Dracula's monstrousness and monstrousness's connection with blood. The Victorians are afraid of seeing themselves as a racial monstrosity, for it hits close to home when the seeming physical weakness of the Victorian is taken into account. They lack the health and vigor of a strong people like the gypsies -- "Forced each day to exercise the body as well as the mind, Gypsies were monuments to the Victorian ideal of mens sana in corpore sano (a sound mind in a sound body)" (Behlmer 239). This is an ideal that the British did not live up to (Behlmer).

The Victorians are afraid to look under the piano leg covers. They are afraid to look into the mirror. Jonathan Harker and Van Helsing both tell us at the very end of the novel that they wish us not to believe their story. They are denying this picture of themselves. They want the story to be fiction so that they can believe it is untrue they are monsters. They are afraid of being destroyed by their own weapons of empire -- "Harker's 'great Kukri knife,' a symbol of British imperial power in India and Morris' Bowie knife, a symbol of American westward expansion. . ." (Arata 641). They have devised a system of values that gives them their identity, but the things they value are the very robbers of identity themselves. They are the vampires of the Victorian world. When Jonathan Harker looks into the mirror, he tells us that the vampire had no reflection, but the vampire did, Jonathan himself! Jonathan thought Dracula was an imposter in Jonathan's own clothing, but is it not the Englishman who is off in a foreign country pillaging and killing children and then their mothers when they cry out.

Then seizing the shaving glass, he went on: "And this is the wretched thing that has done the mischief. It is a foul bauble of man's vanity. Away with it!" and opening the heavy window with one wrench of his terrible hand, he flung out the glass. . . (Dracula 24)

Some of our caricaturists might, he says, take a lesson in the irony of grotesque by comparing the reality and the picture (<u>Dracula 165</u>).

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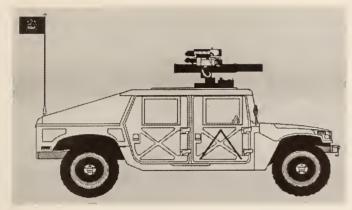
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The Calm Before the Storm by Robert P. Greer

Sitting there on the cold, unyielding floor of the mess deck I realized that I was probably going to die within the next week. Visions of all the things that I missed in life kept flashing through my head. What if I had finished my degree? What if I had not joined the Marines? What if no one would miss me when I was gone? What if...?? The Captain stood up to leave the room and I was drawn back into the reality of the moment. Here I was in the middle of the Persian Gulf on board

an overcrowded ship waiting to hit the beach upon the soil of a foreign land that I had never heard of eight months before. I considered blaming my father for his influences on me and my decision to join the military, but then dismissed such thoughts as silly since it was I who picked up the black government pen and signed my life away upon the dotted line. My platoon sergeant yelled something at all of us and we started shuffling out of the hatch and headed up the stairwell to the flight deck for a formation.

As I stood there in the unpleasant heat of the afternoon I looked around at the rest of the men in the unit and wondered how many of us would return to the good ole' U.S. of A. Even though we had all "volunteered" to be here, all of us would rather be sitting at home in front of a T.V. set with a bottle of Budweiser watching someone else making the news at the top of the hour on CNN. Sergeant Trahan walked down inspecting the troops in my squad making sure our uniforms were pressed and our solemn faces free of facial hair. I though it ironic that even though there was a 60% chance that I would die soon, the powers that be (namely anyone who outranked me) were still concerned about our appearance. I chalked it up to being one of the few, the proud, the brainwashed and oppressed.

In the days that followed we had little time to think of our impending part in President Bush's little war. Our days were packed with classes ranging from desert survival and first-aid for sucking chest wounds to the proper procedures for filling out our wills. With such happy distractions to while away the time, D-day approached with more speed than any of us would have liked. On the night of February 7, I picked up a 65-pound pack and my rifle from the deck of the ship and headed down the long ramp to the well deck where the hovercraft sat like squat loadbeasts. Our HMMV's (they are like jeeps on steroids) were loaded on in neat little rows months before so it was not a difficult task to find mine, open up the cargo hatch, and throw my gear in the rear of the vehicle. I climbed in the passenger side, put my rifle in the rack built into the dash, adjusted my gas mask so it was not digging into my side (no matter how one carries the mask it is an inviolate rule that it must be uncomfortable), and looked around the vehicle. Gotte was already behind the wheel and Savoy was in one of the back seats. Gear was thrown all over the place. There was everything that a modern American fighting man needs in combat: ammo, canteens, weapons, cartons of Marlboros, missiles for our anti-tank weapon system, night vision gear, bottles of Tony Chachere's Creole Seasoning (we were a unit from South Louisiana), M.R.E.'s (that is an abbreviation for Meals Ready to Eat, but that's an oxymoron), and field protective suits that were supposed to keep us alive if we were exposed to nerve or mustard gas. Gotte reached over and flipped the switch to heat the glow plugs that started the massive diesel engine under the armored hood of our vehicle. The engine roared to life and nearly drowned out the sounds of Naval gunfire which had started about an hour before.

Savoy was my best friend in the unit. Back when he was a civilian, he worked most of the time at a bar in Lafayette as a D.J. His love of music passed all normal boundaries and even though it was against every regulation known, he had hooked his jam box into the battery power of the HMMV, mounted it securely above our comm unit, and put a good collection of tapes into a waterproof bag under my seat. In my cramped confines, I shifted around until I could reach the bag and pulled it out. I threw it to him and said, "Pick something good Max." He rummaged around in the bag, handed me a tape, and I slapped it into the slot. Now at least

I knew part of our little jaunt into the desert was going according to plan.

I had not really started worrying too much before then, but when the jet turbines of the hovercraft started to whine, I knew it was literally time to do or die. I felt a sensation of movement and cursed under my breath as the hovercraft rose upon its cushion of air. The hovercraft, also known as LCAC, is really quit remarkable. It could hold 10 HMMV's and about thirty troops, reach speeds in excess of 115 miles per hour, and travel equally well over water, earth, or ice. As I had planned days ago, I forced myself into a different mind-set and forgot about home, my friends, my family--everything but the moment at hand. In the eerie silence that I created in my mind, I began running different movie-like scenarios through their paces. In one scene I was alone in a foxhole and the enemy was approaching in the darkness. I knew that if the situation dictated, I was to pop a flare, look away from the blinding whiteness of it, and open fire. Another scene scrolled onto the viewing screen I had set up, but this one was quite different. Russian-made T-72 tanks were rolling toward our front lines. I mentally checked off the procedures for arming and firing the anti-tank missile mounted on top of the vehicle. I pressed the red firing trigger. I watched as the missile traveled almost two miles away and exploded on the turret of the tank.

The scene even included the burning bodies of the tank crew leaping from their chosen tomb. I had not meant to include this death scene in my mental preparation but it seemed to reinforce what our commanding officer had told us not a week before: "The purpose of war is not to die for your country, but to make the other guy die for his." It seemed rather funny at the time, but now I realized that it was them or us, and my instincts told me that I was to survive no matter what. If I let my feelings for others interfere with my job as a combat soldier, then I was not only disgracing my uniform and country, but also increasing the likelihood I would die or worse yet, cause someone else in my unit to go home in a body-bag.

I pulled a cigarette out from the pack strapped to my helmet and lighted it with a Zippo. I took a deep drag and it seemed to taste better than any cigarette I had ever had. I thought it ironic how the littlest things seemed to take on a new perspective when death looms on the horizon.. The hovercraft moved out of the bowels of the ship and salt water, which was raised from its massive propellers, sprayed mercilessly against the bullet-resistant windshield of our vehicle. That didn't really matter since there wasn't much to see anyway in the darkness of the early morning except the constant flashes from guns on the ships or the explosions of shells impacting on the beachhead.

The droning white noise from the radio was interrupted by my commander's voice. "All right, one minute to prep before landing. When we hit, I went to form up in a diamond formation with the fifty cals in positions two and three. Proceed to objective alpha. Battalion has told us the Republican Guard division has moved off the beach and out of artillery range, but there still might be some ground troops dug in. Keep buttoned up and let the grunts take care of them. I want to get off the beach as soon as possible. Longrifle Actual out." I looked over at Gotte and Savoy and let a smile crease my lips. With the Iraqui army pulling out, there was a better likelihood that we would make a successful landing. We were a shock force and prepared to fight and die if necessary, but only a fool would want to face a division's fire-power. I felt, rather than heard, the hovercraft turbines change their pitch and the saltwater beating on the windshield was replaced by sand. I reached for my rifle, pulled the charging handle to the rear, and let a round slam home. The dust storm outside subsided a bit and the ramp in front dropped, impacting heavily on the sand. The sun was just breaking over the horizon and the first thing I noticed was the once white sand of the beach.

There were shell craters everywhere. In some places the sand was fused into a glassy substance from the heat of the naval gunfire's explosions. It looked like a prop scene from an old John Wayne film. Too bad I was not the Duke and this was not a movie. This was war, and I hoped I was ready. Gotte revved up the engine and waited for the go-ahead from our commander in the vehicle to our left. Savoy reached up and hit the play button on the tape player. The droning of the radio was again interrupted. "O.k. Marines...let's do it," said the confident voice on the radio. As Gotte drove us off the hovercraft, the tape began to play. Savoy had made a good choice. "A shotgun, a rifle, and a four-wheel drive, and a country boy can survive...."



"Stay Tuned"-original ball-point by Joe Parrie

America (with apologies to Ginsberg) by Phaedra Kelly

America, I was Born and bred under Southern skies. under red-rimmed stormy skies. with the wind screaming through my hair. Now, I am an exile by choice. a foreigner on a foreign road. leading me nowhere. but slowly. Empty as my pockets. Dangerous as a well-meaning friend. you pimp with your flash and your frenzy--Everybody's friend and no one's, If the price is right. You have a sense of humor: You must have a sense of humor to be what you are: A dream misplaced, a hope turned sour. I have the freedom to blow my brains out of my "censored" head; I am equally as numbed as most of my fellow suburbanites. But if this is justice, then I am an unjust woman--America. vour essence is not **McDonalds** nor mountains purple majestic nor a stupid flag. It is mansions next to shotgun shacks, crack houses next to churches. It is frat boys barking "nigger" to a little girl skipping down the street. It is the fantasy of a thousand refugees. refused admittance to the promised land, It is the ghettos of a thousand immigrants who are searching for The American Dream in garbage cans and Salvation Army soup kitchens. It is football games, race riots, cable tv, and apple pie. Oh America. You are what I would curl up to on a bitter, wintry night yet shun in the morning's light.



The Moment by Patty Fenton

Leaves stir on broken trees. Dancing water Skirts tires and foreign steel. The scene Is small and almost fake.

Look, see, the tire's still spinning. The slowing Rotation makes a low, hypnotic sound, Slower and lower Until now--there--it's stopped.

Silence then, until the crunch of gravel Brings footsteps closer.
The sterilized eye of a mindless lens Captures
The moment in a flash of immortality.

Now it's gone; like the sense of safety One feels in steel.

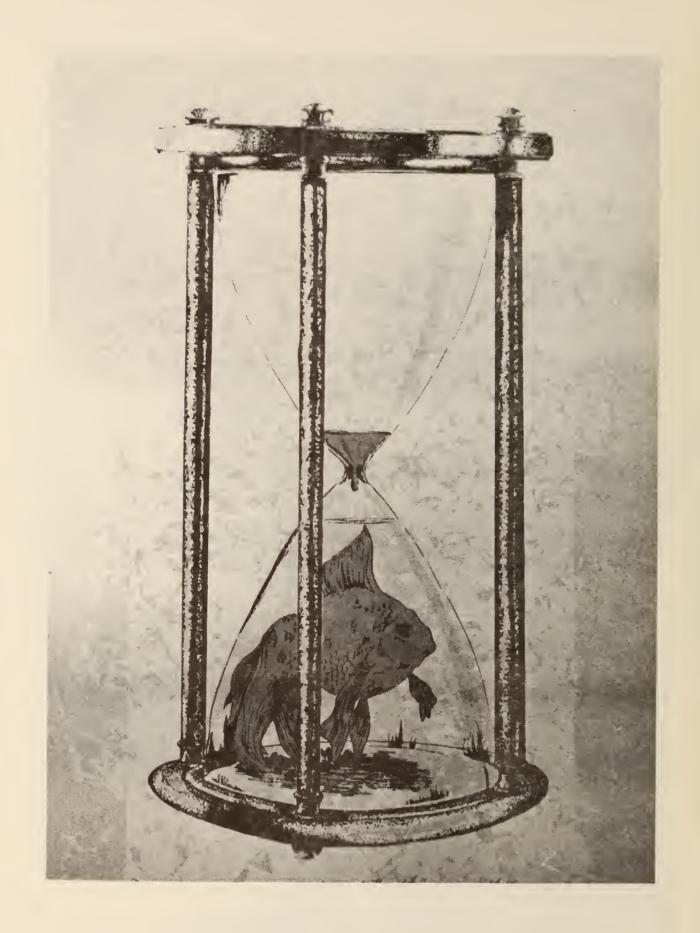
Fragments of London-town by Phaedra Kelly

London-town
Can be as brittle as old
bones or Roman ruins in
its dry, collapsed corruption.
its glories crumbled into dust.
That same dust once blew into my eyes as I waited on the bridge
by the Houses of Parliament,
waiting forOh, I wish I knew,

In my dreams I've traveled the London Underground from Camden Town, with its pseudobohemians, trying to get to Charing Cross via the soul-freezing Northern Line. Instead, I end up shivering outside Angel Station, craving-

I smoke my Silk Cut in the glowing blue light of an early England evening, a truly foreign light, a darkness that illuminates.





"Sanctuary of Thought"-original silkscreen by Mark Kapera

White Lies: The Great Deception of European Colonization

by Randy Price

The term "colonization" has been taught to American school children as a word which rings of newness, discovery, and knowledge. Webster's defines a "colony" as "a group of people who settle in a distant land, but remain under the political jurisdiction of their native land." When one looks closely into the literature that has been written in the last 500 years, one finds that both of the above definitions are incomplete. They fail to mention the horrible repercussions that colonization can have on the people that existed in the lands previous to such colonies. In Alexis de Tocqueville's Democracy in America, Alice Mariott's The Ten Grandmothers, The Narrative of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, and Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye, the effects of European colonization upon African, African American, and Indian races are disclosed. And despite the teachings in our American school systems today, the Europeans did not come to "make friends" with a race of people different from themselves. They came to exploit the land, its native people, animals, plant life, and minerals—essentially to convert all they found into economic fodder for their capitalistic and imperialistic ambitions.

European colonization is the precursor of European civilization; and, in the process of civilization, the African and Indian races were subdued by the Europeans and brainwashed into believing a great lie—that the white race and culture was superior to all others. Those Africans, African Americans (the descendants of Africans born in America), and Indians who refused to conform to European culture—who refused to be subdued—were destroyed.

In <u>Democracy in America</u>, de Tocqueville exposes the European's supremacist view of himself and of his philosophy regarding other races

The European is to the other races of mankind what man himself is to the lower animals: he makes them subservient to his use, and when he cannot subdue he destroys them. (201)

The white men had attained an ideology, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, that whatever they encountered that was not "white" was theirs for the taking. Europeans saw other races as inferior to themselves in education, technology, and religion; it is this sense of superiority that they used for the justification of tyranny over the Africans and Indians. For example, even the prestigious Christopher Columbus, America's forefather, advocated the slavery and subjugation of the Indian race by the Europeans:

They [the Arawak Indians] brought us parrots and balls of cotton and spears and many other things, which they exchanged for glass beads and hawks' bells. They willingly traded everything they owned....They were well-built, with good bodies and handsome features....They do not bear arms, and do not know them, for I showed them a sword, they took it by the edge and cut themselves out of ignorance. They have no iron. Their spears are made of cane....They would make fine servants....With fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want. (cited in Howard Zinn, A People's History of the United States, 1)

In order to minimize the opposition to such subjugation, the European colonist in the New World tried to instill a desire in the natives to be like the whites—to become "white" because white was "better" than black or red.

The Europeans first instilled this belief in the African people, thereby making the black slaves want

to please their white masters. A passage from Frederick Douglass' <u>Narrative</u> shows how he at first desired to look "respectable"—to look white:

This pride of appearance which this would indicate was not my own. I spent the time in washing, not so much because I wanted to, but because Mrs. Lucretia had told me I must get all the dead skin off my feet and knees before I could go to Baltimore; for the people in Baltimore were very cleanly, and would laugh at me if I looked dirty. Besides, she was going to give me a pair of trousers, which I should not put on unless I got all the dirt off me. The thought of owning a pair of trousers was great indeed! It was almost a sufficient motive, not only to make me take off what would be called by pig-drovers the mange, but the skin itself. I went at it in good earnest, working for the first time with the hope of reward. (72)

Thus, the Europeans managed to deceive the African Americans into believing that there is no other community of people than the white community, and if you want to be a part of something—anything—you had to conform to the dictates of the white community (Alexis de Tocqueville, <u>Democracy in America</u>, 203).

This "white lie" can also be observed at work in Toni Morrison's <u>The Bluest Eye</u> where some of the characters strive to gain a sense of self-pride by becoming as "white" as they possibly can, and thereby becoming socially "fit" individuals. Pauline ("Polly") Breedlove is an example of one such character. Pauline desperately wanted to be accepted by the "socially elite" people she admired. She saw that these people seemed to have everything they wanted—they was successful, wealthy, and had both prestige and power. The following passage shows how some of these "socially fit" women viewed Polly, and how Polly wanted to be viewed:

Pauline felt uncomfortable with the few black women she met. They were amused by her because she did not straighten her hair. When she tried to make up her face as they did, it came off rather badly. Their goading glances and private snickers at her way of talking (saying "chil'ren") and dressing developed in her a desire for new clothes and makeup. She merely wanted other women to cast favorable glances her way. (94)

Polly wasn't the only member of her family who felt this need to be accepted be her white world. Her daughter, Pecola, also felt an intense desire to be like the whites. Pecola was immensely dissatisfied with the way she looked. She loathed everything about herself that wasn't "white". She viewed her "blackness" as a horrible ugliness that she couldn't be free of no matter how hard she tried. She wanted blue eyes more than anything in the world—she felt that if she would wake up one day with blue eyes her entire life would be set right and she could finally be happy. Unfortunately for Pecola, she would never be able to be "free" of her "blackness"—she could never change the color of her skin. This fact made her feel quite angry at times, yet she always kept hoping that someday she would be like the little blond-haired, blue-eyed white girls—that someday she would be accepted by others. But, she still remained ashamed of who she was:

The shame wells up again, its muddy rivulets seeping into her eyes. What to do before the tears come. She remembers the Mary Janes. Each pale yellow wrapper has picture on it. A picture of little Mary Jane, for whom the candy is named. Smiling white face. Blond hair in gentle disarray, blue eyes looking at her

out of a world of clean comfort. The eyes are petulant, mischievous. To Pecola they are simply pretty. She eats the candy and its sweetness is good. To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. Love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane. (43)"

It was Pecola's society that told her she wasn't "good enough"—that she didn't have pretty blue eyes, cute blond hair, or dainty dresses. It was this white society that told her that she should feel ashamed of who she was because of her color—because she was different.

The white society in which both Pecola and Polly were raised seemed to promise them power, prestige, and luxury if they managed to become "white." What their society failed to tell them was that non-whites would never be accepted, no matter how hard they tried simply because their skin and their heritage were not white—they were African...they were black. All that the white society allowed the Africans (and Indians) was reality. No matter how hard the African Americans tried to escape their situation, they were always brought back to the mocking face of reality. Polly tells that she went to the movies as often as she could, but the blissful happiness exhibited by the white actors and actresses in the films she watched made her return to reality even more depressing (97). Similarly, when Frederick Douglass began to learn to read, he was suddenly awakened to the reality of how the whites had tricked his race into submission (Douglass' Narrative, 84). He, like Polly, was made unpleasantly aware that he was in a predicament that he seemingly could do nothing about. Of course, Douglass later set his mind to help better his race's situation. But considering how Polly's generation came a great deal after Douglass' time, did African Americans actually gain their freedom from whites? It sadly seems that the answer is no. What about the Indians in this "white" scheme of things? Did the whites subdue the Indians in the same manner in which they oppressed the African Americans and the African slaves?

The slaves may have experienced a similar oppression to the Indians, but the African slaves had been torn from their homeland, where the Indians had not. It was this familiarity that encouraged some Indians to oppose the European's tyranny and lies more successfully than the slaves (Zinn, 26). De Tocqueville explains the situation in this way:

The savage [the Indian] is his own master as soon as he is able to act; parental authority is scarcely known to him; he has never bent his will to that of any of his kind, nor learned the difference between voluntary obedience and a shameful subjugation; and the very name of law is unknown to him. To be free, with him, signifies to escape from all the shackles of society. As he delights in this barbarous independence and would rather perish than sacrifice the least part of it, civilization holds little hold over him...The Indian...has his imagination inflated with the pretended nobilty of his origin, and lives and dies in the midst of these dreams of pride. Far from desiring to conform his habits to ours [the Europeans], he loves his savage life as the distinguishing mark of his race and repels every advance to civilization, less, perhaps, from hatred of it than from a dread of resembling the Europeans. (Democracy In America, 203)

Regardless of the Indians' original defiance of their subjection by the white race, they were still eventually forced to do as the Europeans willed. The Europeans had far superior weoponry with which to defeat the Indians in battle, not to mention the countless foreign diseases they unwittingly brought with them which decimated untold thousands of Indian lives. We learn from Alice Mariott's accounts of the Kiowas that the Europeans slaughtered the buffalo and deer that these Indians depended upon for survival. With these animal necessities depleted, the Indians were forced to migrate further west, where

these animals still thrived. Eventually, the Kiowas had to turn to agriculture if they were to avoid starvation. It was this change that made them dependent upon the white race; for the Europeans' knowledge of raising crops was much more advanced than their own. The whites used this dependence to tame the Kiowas, and begin making the Indians, like the slaves before them, see themselves as inferior to the white race. In the following excerpts from Alice Mariott's The Ten Grandmothers, the Europeans' strategy to gain the Kiowas' land is shown. First, the Europeans destroy the Kiowas' primary food source—the buffalo and deer—thereby leaving them no other option by which to obtain food but by European agriculture. Next, the Europeans weaken the Kiowas' cultural pride (the largest strength they have with which to defeat the white man) by deceiving them into the belief that the "white ways" of religion and society are better than the "Kiowa ways." These tactics are demonstrated in the passage below, in which a European farmer is telling Hunting Horse, a Kiowa man who wishes to keep his land, that the Indian ways are inefficient and useless:

"Indian ways were good for the old days," he [a European farmer] said. "Now new days are coming, white man's days. Indian ways won't work. Everything's changing. Indians will have to change, too. Lots of old things were good things. Too bad to give them up. But the buffalo have gone. Deer are going. Indians want to keep on eating, don't they? Best way to get food is to raise it, like a white man." (219-220)

And secondly, where Leah, a Kiowa woman, recalls how the whites tricked her people:

...Make Indians forget they were Indians. Make them live and think and believe like everybody else. Since they had to live in the other fellows world, let them get ready to fit right into it so that nobody could tell the difference. (275)

And so, once again, the whites bent another race to their will.

It is a strange thing for one person to want to enslave another person. It seems that the white race could gain so much more by trying to befriend a foreign race than it could by oppressing them into slavery and forcing them to leave their homes. By such violent and selfish acts, the whites could only hope to make many bitter enemies out of entire races of people—a bitterness that festers on from generation to generation until the tables are turned and the old masters are turned into the new slaves. And, once revenge has started its vicious circle, it will not end until one of the races is completely destroyed.

Unfortunately, the imperialism of the white race continues to grow even today. Deep in the rain forests of South America, the clearing of the jungle by "civilized" people not only destroys precious trees and animals, it is forcing the native Indian tribes which live there to move elsewhere. Thus, the horrible legacy of the American Indian is happening all over again, and here we sit—allowing it to happen. Until we respect all life and all people, there will be no peace between the humans of this planet; the path we are leading will eventually result in a race's annihilation. When that happens, the remaining races will likewise decline—for when any species of life is made extinct, those species which are left are undoubtedly made poorer.

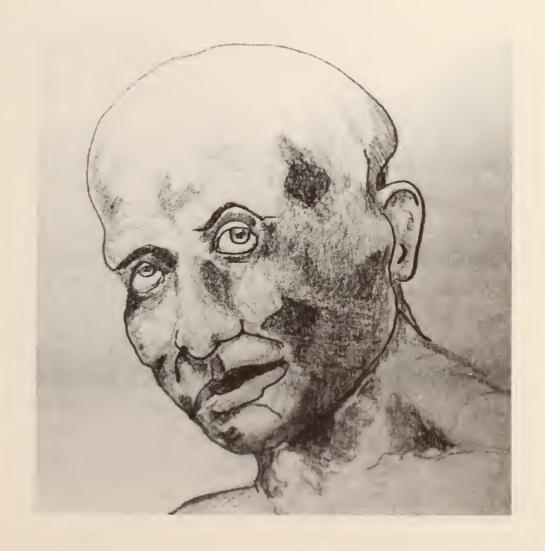
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"Heart of Darkness"-original pencil sketch by Nathan Wood

BIIn d-Tigers by John Doughty, Jr.

for Mr. Jay

Hosea Collins came out of the shadows in a downtown alley and crossed a wide, sunlit street in Cedar Parish, Louisiana. The foul odor of sweat, stale beer, and cheap wine surrounded his ragged clothing, and his lips clinched in disgust across his smooth brown face. "One of these days," he muttered. "One of these days."

He pulled his grimy felt hat down over his anger and his jet-black hair and stepped onto the sidewalk. He walked past the statue of the Confederate soldier, reached the entrance of the courthouse, and paused. "One of these days," he muttered again, removed the hat, and stepped inside the massive, red-brick building.

"Moanin', Massa Davis," he said to the chief deputy and forced his steps in to a shuffle. Deputy Davis paid no attention, and Hosea went around the counter toward a door labeled SHERIFF ARLO C. JOHNSON. It was the first day on the job for Patrolman Harold Newton, and he saw Hosea headed for the door. "Hey!" he yelled. "You can't go in there!"

"Shut up, Newton," the deputy ordered.

Without knocking, Hosea opened the door.

The young patrolman asked, "Who was that? Damn, he stinks!"

"Hosey Collins. He runs a blind-tiger."

"What's that?"

"An unlicensed bar over in the quarters. Name's the Dewdrop Inn."

Hosea entered the room and softly closed the door. A row of large, ornately framed portraits and pictures of former sheriffs lined one of the crumbling plaster walls. All the old men had varying amounts of facial hair but the same stern, righteous look on their faces. Attached to the opposite wall, without frames and in no order, post-mortem pictures of men executed on the courthouse's basement gallows stared across the room at the whiskered old men. All had the same ghastly look, and all the faces were black.

The sheriff sat behind his desk, and American flag on the pole to his right, a Confederate on to his left, and a portrait of Dwight Eisenhower frowning from the wall behind him. The wet stub of a black cigar moved from one side of the sheriff's mouth to the other, but his blood-shot eyes never left a stack of papers. Hosea shuffled toward him, reached the desk and said, "Moanin' Massa Johnson."

The sheriff made no reply. Hosea reached into his pocket and pulled out seven, grimy, five-dollar bills. He had searched through his weekend proceeds for the filthiest bills and now laid them on the sheriff's desk.

The cigar shifted sides. Soft, pink fingers moved from clean white paper to soiled green, and the sheriff, handling the bills like excrement, counted them slowly. Satisfied, he opened a drawer and scraped the bills onto a stack of equally dirty money. He closed the drawer. His eyes met Hosea's, and his fingers began drumming the surface of his desk. Hosea dutifully bowed his head, watching the vibrating fingers. A long, noisy, yet somehow silent moment passed, the ragged figure of Hosea caught in a crossfire of stares from men both dead and alive. But the fingers finally stopped; the hands flattened on the desk, and the sheriff growled, "We had two complaints about fightin' at yore place."

"Yas'sa," Hosea answered and started backing toward the door.

"And you tell yore people," the sheriff ordered, "that I ain't havin' no Civil Rights demonstrations in Cedar Parish."

"Yas'sa," Hosea lied, "I's sho 'nuf gwine to tell them thet."

Brown saliva dripped from the cigar, and the eyes returned to the papers. But just as Hosea reached the door, the sheriff raised his head. "Hosea?"

"Yas'sa," Hosea answered, his hand on the knob.
"Brang me a bottle of good bourbon, next week."

"Yas'sa," Hosea replied and closed the door of the white man's office.

A few minutes later Hosea reached the Dewdrop Inn, a large, ramshackle room built across the front of this neat frame home. He entered a rear door and immediately removed

the filthy clothing and took a bath. His wife rolled the stinking rags in a paper bag and placed it in the corner of a closet. It would remain there until the following Monday.

When the stench was washed from his body, Hosea put on a white silk shirt and a pair of skin-tight black pants. He placed gold rings on several of his fingers, a gold chain around his neck, and sat on the edge of the bed and slipped his feet into a pair of alligator shoes. Then he walked through the kitchen of his home, opened the door that connected the house to the Dewdrop Inn, and cleaned empty beer and wine bottles from the bar.

The Sunday night crowd had left the Dewdrop Inn in shambles. The floor and tables were littered with over-turned ashtrays, cigarette butts, and empty and not-so-empty beer, wine, and whiskey bottles. A woman had danced with the wrong man, fists had flashed, then a razor, and, now, chairs were overturned, a splintered table lay on its side, and flies buzzed a pool of coagulated blood in the middle of the dance floor.

Hosea's wife entered the room and began mopping the blood. Someone knocked on a small window behind the bar.

"Yea," Hosea said as he opened the window and peered into the face of a white man.

"Six-pack of Pearl and a half-pint of Four Roses," the white man ordered.

The parish was dry, so the Dewdrop Inn did a land-office white business through the window. Hosea handed the man a stack of beer and liquor and said, "Three dollars."

The white man said nothing and handed Hosea his money. Hosea placed the bills into

the cigar box he used for a cash register and closed the lid.

Out on the dance floor, his wife had finished mopping. He walked past her, unlocked the front door, and opened it. She wrung her mop into a bucket, dumped the red liquid in the tall grass beside the rotting front steps, and closed the door. The morning sun beamed through cracks and cast pencil shafts of light from bullet holes to the dingy floor. The Dewdrop Inn was now officially open for business.

The first black customer of the day soon sat at the bar, sipping white port wine from a pint bottle. Hosea's wife started sweeping under the tables. Hosea walked to the juke-box, plugged it into the electrical outlet, and the dark, cavernous room came to life in a sudden display of neon brilliance. The juke-box still had nickels in it, and as Hosea walked back to the bar, it began playing "Big Blue Diamonds" by Little Willie John.

Big diamonds, big blue diamonds, how they sparkle

The customer, and elderly wino, pushed a quarter across the bar, and Hosea handed him a fresh pint of wine. The juke-box played, and Hosea looked around the room and said, "The white man calls this place a blind-tiger. Wonder why?"

But what can they do to warm love grown cold

His wife shrugged her shoulders and said, "Who cares?" When you're lonesome in the moonlight, you need loving

The wino's toothless mouth emitted words of wisdom: "This place ain't no blind-tiger." Then he stretched his arm across the bar, pointed a quivering, bony brown finger at Hosea, and said, "You a blind-tiger."

Big diamonds, big blue diamonds, they are so cold

The bony finger turned to Hosea's wife. "She's a blind-tiger."

I'd gladly do my part to mend your broken heart The old man then declared, "I'm a blind-tiger!" "What do you mean?" Hosea asked with a frown.

"All the black folks in this parish are blind-tigers," the old man explained. "They a

blind-tiger the white man got by the tail and can't let go,"

His bleary eyes looked at Hosea and the old man said, "They's more black folk in this parish than white folk. The days comin' when the black folk are gonna get to vote. When that day comes, the black man's gonna run this parish!"

Hosea and his wife nodded their heads in total agreement. Hosea exclaimed, "That's

right! It's comin'! It's comin'!"

The old man's voice rose, and he roared, "THE BLIND-BLACK-TIGER'S GONNA SPEAK!" Hosea's wife stopped sweeping. "WE GONNA SPEAK!" she echoed and shook her broom like a weapon. "WE GONNA SPEAK!"

"THAT'S RIGHT!" Hosea shouted.

Then the old man pointed his finger around the room and declared, "We gonna elect an

honest sheriff! This blind-tiger-bar ain't gonna be here no more!"

Hosea's mouth dropped open in shock. His dark eyes glared, and his lips clinched. "Git vore black ass outta my bar!"

The wino picked up his bottle and weaved a path toward the door. Hosea's brow wrinkled as he watched the old man stagger away, and his brown fingers started nervously drumming the surface of the bar. The fingers stopped; the hands flattened, and Hosea's eyes stared at his rings, glimmering in the light from the juke-box. The song finished playing.

I just want a love behind . . . a band of gold.

* * *

As he had done on Monday mornings for many years, Hosea Collins came out of an alley and crossed the wide street in front of the Cedar Parish courthouse. He carefully stepped over the curb, walked slowly past the Confederate soldier, and paused when he reached the entrance of the gray, concrete building. "One of these days," he muttered. "One of these days."

He forced a smile to his wrinkled brown face and stepped inside. The chief deputy paid no attention as Hosea walked behind the counter, and Hosea said, "Good morning, Newton."

"Morning, Hosey," the deputy replied, and Hosea headed toward a door labeled SHER-IFF WILLARD T. SAMPSON.

Hosea opened the door and entered the office. Illuminated by tiny, brass-plated lamps, framed portraits and pictures of former sheriffs lined the dark, paneled walls on both sides of the door. Their piercing eyes stared across the room at each other but seemed to follow Hosea as he walked across the plush carpet toward a mahogany desk. To the right of the desk stood an American flag, to the left, a Louisiana one, and behind the desk, a portrait of Jimmy Carter smiled from the wall.

The sheriff, a cigarette white in his lips, paid no attention as Hosea reached the desk and pulled five, filthy twenty-dollar bills from his pocket. Not a word was spoken by either man, and Hosea lay the grimy bills on the paper littered, mahogany surface. Then the sheriff placed the cigarette in an ashtray, raked the dirty money into a drawer full of equally dirty money, and said, "Burn those rags, Hosey. You've got better clothes than that."

"Yes sir." Hosea said, turned, and walked toward the door.

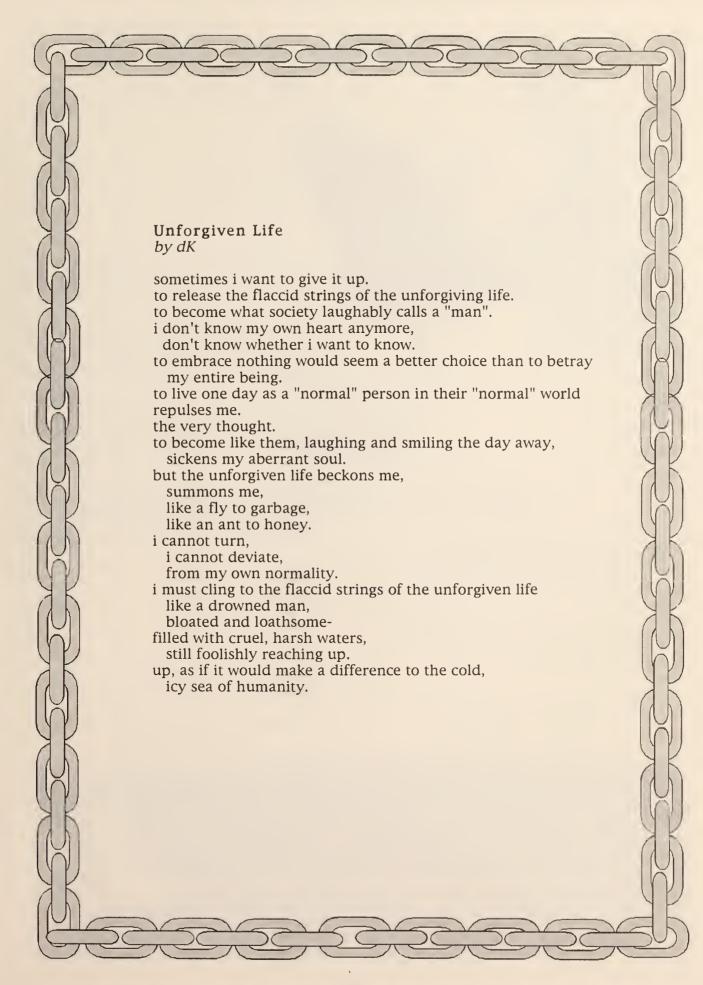
A think trail of smoke drifted from the cigarette, and the sheriff watched Hosea through the haze. As Hosea put his hand on the knob, the sheriff spoke. "Hosey?"

"Yes sir?"

"Bring me a fifth of good scotch next week."

"Yes sir," Hosea said and closed the door of the black man's office.

The Sheriff happily drummed his brown fingers on the surface of his desk. They stopped, and he flattened his hands, admiring the sparkle of gemstones on three of his fingers. He closed the drawer, propped his feet on his desk, and leaned back in his chair. The hands and rings locked into the jet-black hair at the back of his head, and he began singing a song he head heard as a child: "Big-g-g-g diamonds, big blue diamonds, how they sparkle..."





ALGORITHMS by Sarah E. New

I once had a friend who told me that no one is as free as a bird in the sky

As I wish to be

I'll leave it to you to understand how society works he told me

Now as I try to learn to use a computer I recall what he said

It seems to me that the computer is a machine sort of like society

it says to me

CONFORM OR DO NOT PASS GO

play this game by my rules, sister and not your own

and do not press escape to get out of the program

ACCESS DENIED

The Sun and the Moon

by Frank Lewis

The Sun and the Moon had a great fight, about the distribution of the Sun's heavenly light. The Moon wanted more--the Sun would not give.

"Because without me," the Sun said, "the Earth could not live."

The Moon replied, "I do not care about the Earth, I want to be equal."
"Why should I worry about those measly little people?"
"Fear not." said the Sun, "for we all have a purpose."

"Was it not you whom man first touched the surface?"

"I stand alone, no one may come close-it is you my friend, who truly has the most."

"I would trade it," shouted the Moon, "to be as bright as you are,

"Then let it be so," replied the Sun, "we shall be equal."
"You will get light, I will get people."
After they traded, the Earth went up in flames.
The Moon now said the Sun was to blame.

to be the giver of warmth--king of all stars."

"Look what you have done, you gave me too much light, you have destroyed the Earth by making me too bright!"
"No, it was you!" Cried the Sun, "You had to be the most, You destroyed the Earth by shining your light too close."

"I gave you my light, and you chose to misuse it."
"You could have been equal, instead you abused it."
Now they stand alone, the Moon a pale reflection,
the Sun a dull star of bright imperfection.

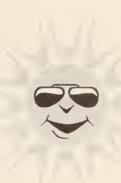
STARGAZER by C. Michael Edwards

I watch the stars from a textbook read about them from a screen. In the crash of scenes I cannot look. The nightlife stole my dream.

The stars cannot shine my way again. Greater eyes than mine are blind beneath a sky that we have slain to show the power of our kind.

I wish the stars could come to me, but they cannot reach my sight. After a thousand light years journey, they stumble at a city's light.





The Sacrifice by Debra Bailey

Marlene Collins sat on her back steps and contemplated the clean clothes billowing in the salty gulf breeze. She always felt pity whenever she saw a person's life on two skinny lines. Did people passing by feel that way about her laundry, she wondered. Her arms were folded on her hunched knees as she watched bits of life flapping: a shirt, a dress, a slip.

Rubbing her hands across her flat stomach and then up to her protruding ribs, she recalled how Steve had insisted on this move. "One road in and one road out. You see, Marlene, if we drove six more feet, we would drop off in the mouth of the muddy Mississippi River." Was that trip down the road an attempt to cheer her, she thought.

What was that flying in her clothesline post? Of course, a perfect place for a nest. The poor bird didn't stand a chance for a decent tree limb. Where are the trees in this town? Barren that's what it is!

Hearing the mother bird chattering to her babies, she considered the interesting legend surrounding birds. Didn't people in ancient worlds believe that the arrival and departure of birds were omens of future events? Pondering this a while she brushed her long fingers across he sharp plane of her blonde hair.

Staring blindly in the sun, Marlene's thoughts returned once again to the past... "I'm sorry Mrs. Collins; there wasn't anything we could do. The umbilical cord was wrapped tightly around his neck." Many months later her doctor tried to console her, tried to wave away her problem . . . "It's perfectly normal for you to feel this way, Marlene. Just give it more time."

"Hi." Startled, she looked up into the face of a boy carrying a fishing pole over his back.

"Why, hello," she said squinting her hazel eyes against the sun in order to get a better look at him. He was wearing a tee shirt that said, "Wildcats." His feet were the most extraordinarily dirty feet that she had ever seen. However, his hair looked reasonably clean, and she liked the shape of his dark evebrows. Often she had envied such expressive evebrows on other people. Her own were too light and thin.

The boy blurted out through the gap in his front teeth, "Can I dig some worms out of your yard?"

"What's wrong with your vard?"

"Nuthin. My mom don't like holes is all."

"She doesn't, huh?"

"Nope," he replied as he looked at the grass.

"Well, you can dig here on one condition," she responded.

"Yeah, what's that?" he asked.

"That you eat some watermelon with me after you finish."

Excited, he yelled, "Sure, lady, sure!"

"Just call me Marlene."

"O.K. I'm Sam."

"Pleased to meet you Sam. I'll go fix everything and bring it out here while you dig."

"Turning to go in, she smiled. Maybe she could get him to stay a while after they ate. Hurriedly she searched for trays, knives, and salt. Glancing out the window, she noticed him looking at the mother bird flapping around the clothesline pole. She wondered if he

liked birds. The tray, loaded with sweet watermelon, was ready and Marlene carried it outside. What she saw made her drop the tray; it went clanking and flying. The boy, kneeling on the ground by the bird's nest, was methodically strangling the baby birds. The though that he must have gotten the nest out with his fishing pole ran wildly through her mind. Quickly, she

clutched his tee shirt and spurted the word, "Murderer."

Fine spittle sprayed on him as she continually shouted, "Murderer! Murderer! Murderer! Murderer! Murderer!

Looking up at here with a frightened face, he said, "Lady, they make good bait!" She

threw him away from her and he ran off thinking she was mad.

Dropping to her knees on the sunburnt grass, Marlene could only rub her palms furiously over and over on her thighs. The sun gave an unusually bright glare while she focused her eyes on the bird's nest. The thorny mass of twigs looked like a crown.

Three of the birds were dead, but one was very much alive. she kept staring at it. Flick her tongue across her cracked, chapped lips, she felt strange. Marlene could not tell how long she sat there staring as the bird piped and squeaked desperate sounds because her mind was seeing a picture that had completely captured her.

Marlene could see herself leaning over the baby bird. Her hot fingers wrapped around its bony neck. She could see sparse hairs poling through the pink infant skin in random patterns; her grip tightened. She could see the form quivering and pulsating under her palm. She could see the bird's neck, lying limp over her fingers.

Jerking her body up, the woman stumbled and fell. Like a blind person, she groped her

way; but, she could clearly hear the mother screaming in the noonday sun.



Frozen Weeds by Cher M. Couvillion

What's worse than frozen weeds?
Unwanted nuisances covered with ice.
Poking up from the fresh, deep, printless snow,
Like scars on a baby's face.
Even with sure death ahead,
They stand proud,
Popsicles for a sick cat,
Invincible to the wind,
Surviving in icy incubators,
Tainting my view of Wisconsin,
Until they thaw,
Weeping into a pile on the white hillside.



"Untitled"-original black and white photo by Mark Kapera

God and His Forces in This Present Darkness

by Lisa Price

For we are not contending against the flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:12

Frank E. Peretti introduces his book <u>This Present Darkness</u> with a quote from the biblical book of Ephesians. This quote summarizes the basis of the entire novel, speaking of angels and demons, the Host of Heaven, and the dogs of hell--all foreshadowing the events told in the book of Revelation. Even though this novel is apocalyptic at times, a description of the apocalypse does not seem to be Peretti's purpose. He represents the Host of Heaven in a different light from previous representations. This positive outlook on heavenly forces is unique when compared to that of other recent supernatural fiction.

In Stephen King's <u>Creepshow</u>, there is no positive force represented in any of the tales included. All of the stories end in murder with no retribution for the villain. There is no account for the forces of good at all. Very few of the stories in <u>The Complete Masters of Darkness</u> represent the forces of good either. On the other hand, Bram Stoker's <u>Dracula</u> does represent the forces of good.

In <u>Dracula</u>, the things that Count Dracula is most afraid of represent the heavenly forces, such as the crucifix and the Host. Peretti takes this one step further by adding prayer to this list. Through prayer, the heavenly warriors gain enough strength to eventually defeat the forces of evil.

Throughout the novel, Peretti compares the battle that takes place at the small town of Ashton to the defeat that the heavenly warriors achieve at Babylon. He even uses the warriors that fought at Babylon. One reason for using the same warriors that battled at Babylon may be to represent the eternal quality of the battle between good and evil. This can also be seen in Stoker's careful notation that Count Dracula is several centuries old and was involved with the ancient holy wars between the Rumanians and the Turks.

This motif of the conflict of good versus evil does not seem to be present in many modern works of supernatural fiction. Stephen King does not use this motif in <u>Creepshow</u>. In "After the Funeral" by Hugh B. Cave (included in <u>The Complete Masters of Darkness</u>), which includes a demon, the forces of heaven, represented by the preacher in this story, are portrayed as a weak and futile match against the forces of evil. This is not true of <u>This Present Darkness</u>.

Even though the forces of good are given a weakness (lack of prayer cover), they are portrayed as knowing and powerful in the face of evil. This is a completely different perspective from other modern supernatural fiction.

Instead of the human characters having full knowledge of their world revealed by Fate, the heavenly forces are responsible for the slow revelation of the true situation. This is an unusual standpoint for modern supernatural fiction. In <u>Creepshow</u>, King assumes that Fate is responsible for metering out rewards and punishments as revelation becomes apparent. In <u>This Present Darkness</u>, the angels do not assume this position of judgement, they assume that God will dole out punishment on judgement day as mentioned in the book of Revelation.

This Present Darkness seems completely unusual for its era when compared to other novels and short stories of its time by authors such as Stephen King and Hugh B. Cave. He uses motifs not commonly employed in supernatural fiction of the same era which makes his novel stand out from others. The stances taken by this novel are different from those of other novels and maybe that it is why it is published as Christian fiction and not as supernatural or horror fiction.

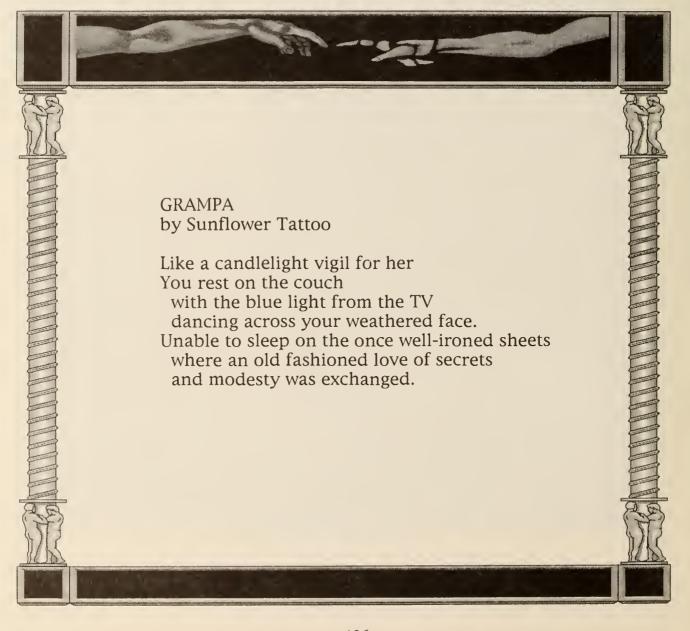
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Poem #1130: A "Transitive and Cool" Poem by Nathan Wood

That odd old man is dead a year --We miss his stated Hat. 'Twas such an evening bright and stiff His faded lamp went out.

Who miss his antiquated Wick --Are any hoar for him? Waits any indurated mate His wrinkled coming Home?

Oh Life, begun in fluent Blood And consummated dull! Achievement contemplating thee --Feels transitive and cool.

Poem #1130, perhaps written in 1868, was only a penciled draft, and was first published in 1945. Although a lesser-known poem, it remains a good representation of Emily Dickinson's attitude towards death and, more specifically, the passage of time. The poem is about the recollection of the death of an "odd old man" a year past, and the questions, impressions, reactions, and realizations induced by that recollection. Each of the three stanzas in the poem illustrates a natural reaction to the initial image in the poem, beginning with impressions followed by questions and ending with a sobering conclusion. Although the formal qualities of the poem such as meter, punctuation, and capitalization certainly affect the reader's understanding or impression of the poem, the primary vehicles of communication in poem #1130 are imagery and metaphor. The main metaphor of the poem -- that of life represented by light, whether as a "faded lamp" or a "Wick" -- illustrates the transience of life, its brightness and warmth, and most importantly, the coolness, dullness, and stiffness experienced when it is gone.

Let us first consider the formal aspects of the poem. It is in Common Meter (iambic; with lines of eight and six syllables alternately) and in three stanzas of two two-line sentences apiece. Other than the first words of each line, which are all capitalized, only five other words in the poem begin with a capital letter: Hat, Wick, Home, Life, and Blood. With the exception of "Life," each of these capitalized words is found at the end of the line it occupies. The capitalization along with the location of "Hat" and "Wick" at the end of the lines helps the reader to see those words together, visually equating the hat on the man's head with the wick of a lamp. "Home" and "Blood" are not equated but accentuated by a capital letter and their locations. The punctuation is not especially striking. There are only three "Dickinson dashes" in the poem, as well as three periods, two question-marks, and one exclamation point -- all used in a traditionally correct way to punctuate complete grammatical sentences. Although the feeling of the poem is best conveyed through its metaphors, formal features help us better understand it. The regularity in meter, for example,,,, accentuated by the numerous hard, dental sounds in the poem (reminiscent of the steady ticking of a clock), reminds us that life and memory are transitory.

The poem begins with the observation that a particular odd, old gentlemen has been dead for a year. The man, though unnamed, is recognized by the audience (It's "That" old man, and "We miss his stated hat" [emphasis mine]). In the first line, we learn that the man has been dead for a year, thus inducing us to consider Time while reading the poem. Also, we know that this initial observation is a recollection -- a recollection of not so much a past event, but an impression. The man no longer comes around and the speaker and included audience miss his fixed, recognizable hat. The hat symbolizes the man.

The following line introduces two adjectives -- "bright" and "stiff." Although they seem somewhat contradictory as descriptors of the evening on which the old man passed away, the two simple monosyllabic adjectives incorporate the dual aspect of the main metaphor of the poem. That is, the brightness of life and the stiffness of death. This fits well with the image in

the next half of the sentence, the "faded lamp." We infer that on a similar evening a year ago the "faded lamp went out" ("'Twas such an evening" [as the one presently experienced] that the old man died.) Apparently, a "bright and stiff" evening has caused this recollection of the odd, old man described in the first stanza.

The first stanza, then, illustrates remembering. We see the antecedent, or cause of what is recalled, bright and stiff evening; and the recollection itself, a "stated Hat." It is not events that are recalled but images (hat, lamp) or impressions. Naturally, this observation (a renewed awareness of the absence of a formerly regularly-appearing old man) incites some questions:

Who miss his antiquated Wick --Are any hoar for him? Waits any indurated mate His wrinkled coming Home?

The speaker asks whether anyone misses his "antiquated Wick." (Wick is a metonymy for Light, which was, actually, a word Dickinson considered as a replacement. "Wick," of course, is the better choice because it alludes to the hat on the man's head, as well as being a part of a faded lamp.) Continuing, she wonders if any are "hoar" for lack of him. ("Hoar," a word of Anglo-Saxon origin, means "greyish-white, esp. of the hair, head, or beard" [The Oxford English Dictionary, 1989]. "Hoar-frost" is the frozen water vapour on lawns [OED], and in Emily Dickinson's poetry the word hoar carries this double meaning of whiteness and coldness [see poems #525, #1316].) The speaker then questions if a stiff, old wife awaits her husband's return home. The repetition of "any" demonstrates the speaker's speculation and uncertainty. She knows little about this man, only assuming that his destination was always his home. Once again, her choice of words furthers the light/life metaphor. To be "indurated," is to be made hardened or stiff (OED). Without the glow of her husband's, has this imagined wife, too, grown cool, white, and stiff?

These thoughts and questions prompt in the third and final stanza an exclamation about life. The poet addresses Life, which "begun in fluent Blood [is] consummated dull."

Oh Life, begun in fluent Blood And consummated dull! Achievement contemplating thee --Feels transitive and cool.

Life, begun bright, warm, red and flowing like blood and also like the freshly lit lamp, grows dull until it is snuffed out, leaving only a cool, grey-white wick. It is almost as if the speaker is saying that to be born means that we will die, just as a lighted lamp will eventually burn low and then go out. The speaker concludes: "Achievement" could mean the completion of something (consummation, arrival at that final destination of home) or our ability to comprehend the aforementioned truth. Regardless, it "feels transitive and cool."

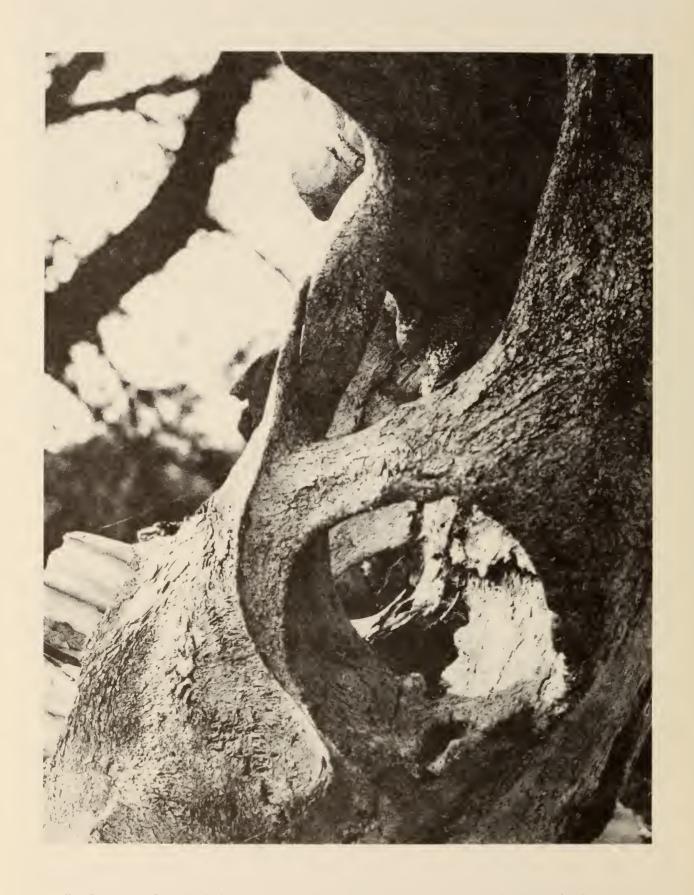
The speaker determines something general but personal by describing how achievement feels changeful or liable to pass into another condition -- and cool. This final pair of adjectives is likewise an interesting combination. "Transitive" describes an intellectual reaction to the situation while "cool" is wholly physical. The speaker's final reaction to the recollection discussed in this poem is a realization of the ephemeral nature of life and a physical feeling of coolness. The speaker laments the "fading out" and consequent death of the old man -- it was this recollection that spawned these thoughts -- but the conclusion of this poem is more general than that. Understanding that any life will be "consummated dull" is a sobering thought.

Poem #1130 is about reactions to, and impressions of the aging process and passing away, and is itself an illustration of our realization of this fact: Life fades away. Each stanza develops this thought, first conceived as a recollection, then followed by questions, and finished with an analysis about life. Though the poem may seem to be about a past event it is almost always in the present tense. With the exception of the fourth line, where the verb is in past tense, the other verbs ("miss," "are," "waits," and "feels") tell us that these impressions

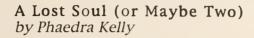
are all occurring now. The unusual amount of dental sounds in the poem ("odd," "old," "dead," "stated," "hat," "'twas," "bright," "faded," "antiquated," "indurated," "waits," "mate," "wrinkled," "fluent," "consummated," "achievement," "contemplating," and "transitive") make a sort of ticking sound and the past participles "stated," "faded," "antiquated," "indurated," and "consummated" echo the word "dead" heard in the first line. Once again, a formal feature of the poem conveys the feeling that all that is living will pass away. It is almost as if to say, "With each tick of the clock, with each passing moment, we are closer to being 'dead." Whether or not the dental sounds in the poem greatly affect our understanding of the poem may be purely conjectural. However, the imagery and metaphor in the poem tell us that our conclusion about those sounds could not be more right. Just as a faded lamp slowly burns low, so too did "[t]hat odd old man" grow older. Something that was regular ("his stated Hat") is now gone. His life, like a lighted candle, was snuffed out. Without the "Wick" -- without the warmth and brightness of the light, the "indurated mate" and the speaker feel "cool." Life is indeed "transitive" and "fluent." We know and feel that all is fluid, flux, flowing and glowing will flicker, fade, and be gone.



"Winter's Night on the Ukranian Steppes"-original ball-point sketch by Nathan Wood



"After, Afterlife"-original black and white photo by Mark Kapera



She sits upon the sofa where her weight has crushed one cushion flat, flat like her monotonic voice droning on about her healthshe claims she does not want to die; I don't believe her-I cannot save her, though I try, try like my own soul depends on it. Though I can make her cry so easily, I cannot make her laugh. But if I cannot save her, I will save that part of her within myself-Nurture it, cherish it, renew it-So that in time, her ringing laughter will fill my house as it bubbles from my mouth.



May 20, 1993 by Carol Bernard

gentle old men follow placidly as their wives power shop in the world of retail, the mediocrity of K-Mart.

men with eyes of quiet resignation ache to be out of the store, to be free in the tiny squares that are their lawns, mowing grass and trimming hedges--

imagining independence in their castles.



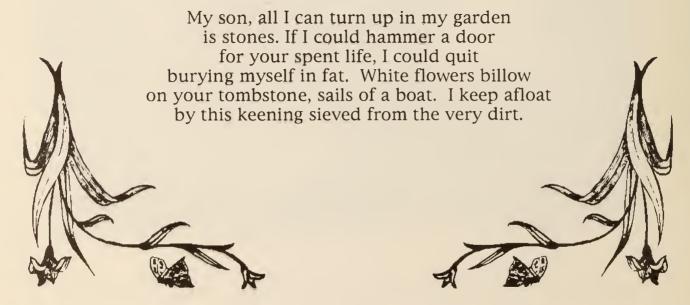
This fall I can't keep my hands out of the dirt.

Each stone is luckier that I
to be buried like my son. I sleep on a bed
with a door between mattresses, flowering to fat.

Only the rustle-song of hyacinthes
keep me buried in this life.

My son died before he learned living.
I study milled lumber in the yard to build boats or coffins with watered taffeta tucked inside. Over and over I worry his death like a smooth stone and my other sons stand in the doorway lifting their white hands.

At night my dreams bloom into a song about a family living in a simple shack of milled timber. The husband and sons are killed by a tornado made of hyacinthes and the mother palms dirt to cover them. On the chorus, she wonders why she's alone and chilled.



The Use of Anencephalic Tissue for Transplantation: A Moral Dilemma?

by Randy Price

One of our greatest assets as members of the species Homo Sapiens is our ability to create and modify tools that we use to enhance the quality of human life. Tissue transplantation is one of these "tools." Our

...rapidly improving technical ability to transplant fetal organs such as kidney, liver, heart, bone marrow, and pancreatic islet cells may offer the possibility of saving the lives of a significant number of children. Approximately 7.500 children are born annually with a fatal cardiac disorder. Of these approximately 500 are born with fatal hypoplastic left heart syndrome that may benefit from a neonatal heart transplant. If organs were available for renal transplantation, 400 to 500 children with fatal renal disease could be removed from dialysis each year in the United States. Fetal liver and thymus transplantation has been utilized in children born with fatal combined immunodeficiencies. There are some 800 children born each year with liver failure or metabolic defects who could survive through liver transplantation...Of all the children who are awaiting organ transplantation, 40% to 70% will die before suitable organs can be found...One possibility for increasing the donor pool for neonatal tissue and organs involves using anencephalics as an organ source. In the United States approximately 2,000 to 3,000 anencephalics are born each year, 50% of which are born alive. Of these, approximately two-thirds will die in the first 24 hours, with the additional one-third expiring within one week. Most die from respiratory failure after repeated episodes of bradycardia and asphyxia. Anecephaly is a uniformly fatal disease (Cefalo and Engelhardt, 28).

The majority of those who disagree with the use of anencephalic tissue for transplants feel that it is inhumane to terminate still-living anencephalic infants (Cefalo and Engelhardt, 33) Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language defines the word humane as "characterized by tenderness, compassion, and sympathy for men and animals, esp. for the suffering or distressed." (691) Is it, then, inhumane for us to terminate an anencephalic infant, an infant born only with a brain-stem -- who will unconditionally die within one week, and who could never possibly experience their world -- in order to transplant this infant's fetal tissue so that other children may live? It would be far more cruel and selfish to deny these children, who do have a chance for a normal life, a heart, liver, kidney, (etc.) transplant. Therefore, it is our responsibility, as humane members of the human race, to use fetal tissue that is acquired from anencephalic infants for transplant purposes in situations where other human lives could be saved.

According to scientific research, "no [true] harm can be done to a being [(i.e., an anencephalic infant)] that has neither a sense of self or the capacity to feel pain" (Cefalo and Engelhardt, 25). Furthermore, "the capacities for sentience, a minimal condition for personhood, are never realized by an anencephalic, the entity has never been alive as a person" (Cefalo and Engelhardt, 25). Thus, an anencephalic infant is not-- and will never be -- aware of its surroundings. It can never learn, it cannot play, it cannot suckle from its mother's breast, it cannot make its own decisions. As mentioned earlier, the maximum life span of an anencephalic infant is one week. It costs a tremendous sum of money for life support costs to keep such an infant alive. No humane individual wants to see a child -- any child -- die, but when faced with the facts of hospital cost and the anencephalic infant's brief longevity, it seems selfish to keep this infant on long-term life support. Those funds could be used for minimizing the cost of transplanting anencephalic fetal tissue to those children who desperately need a heart, kidney, liver, or pancreatic islets.

We find it "merciful" to remove an adult that is in a permanently comatose state from

long-term life support. Why, then, do we not consider it an act of mercy to remove an anencephalic infant from a similarly hopeless situation? The answer probably has something to do with our precious views on infants -- we want so much for them to experience life, to grow up -- that we extend their life-support as long as possible. Yet, unlike permanently comatose adults, these infants have never and will never form their own history, they will never develop a personality (Cefalo and Engelhardt, 32). It is sad, but it would be the "humane thing to do" if we made the best of an otherwise hopeless situation (i.e., to use the fetal tissue from these infants to save the lives of other children and adults suffering from Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Disease).

As an altruistic and humane people, we should strive to help others when we can, even if the helping involves terminating a life that was destined to die. Radical animal rights activists have taken a similar stance in the past: all creatures have a right to life, and that right supersedes any possible benefits that medicine could provide by destroying those creatures' lives in order to help a human survive. Where do we draw the line? Bacteria is a living organism -- should we then refrain from breathing? Every breath we intake inevitably kills those bacteria that are present in the air. Are bacteria, plants, and other animals' lives more valuable than our own? When faced with the choice, should we extend long-term life-support to an anencephalic infant who could not live otherwise or terminate that infant's life so that we can save another child's life by transplanting the anencephalic's fetal tissue? I opt for the latter decision, for it is a chance to change death into a fighting chance for life. As a soon-tobe father. I admit that it would be a very painful decision to make if my baby was discovered to be an anencephalic infant. Yet, how would I feel if my baby was born with a fatal heart disease, and there was a chance to save its' life via fetal tissue transplantation? I would certainly want to try for the transplantation. In my opinion, it would be impossible for a humane father of an anencephalic infant to deny this other child the fighting chance for a beautiful and fulfilling life. I hope that others who disagree would put themselves in the hypothetical shoes of the "other" person when they go about declaring that "anencephalic fetal tissue transplantation is immoral, unethical, and inhumane." Selflessness begets selflessness, and selfishness begets selfishness -- hopefully, we will soon come to realize this before another year passes and another 40 to 70 percent of our needy children die needlessly.

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The Barnstormer

by Fred L. Taulbee, Jr.

You hear that, Officer? You'd almost think that was the sound of thunder coming from my barn over yonder. That's why I calls the thing my Barnstormer. He always makes that sound when it's feeding time.

Yeah, the guy you're looking for was up here asking about my Barnstormer about three months ago. That nosy, no-good reporter, and he was just a kid, probably about your age too, Officer. I'll tell you exactly what I told him, but I couldn't tell him much on account he kept butting in with questions, when I told him not to ask questions, but I'll tell you the story just like I told it to him.

I told him, "keep your cameras in your bag and your pencil in your ear. It's disrespect to be writing when someone else is talking. I'm an old coot, and I ain't got much voice left to keep repeating things just so you can write them down. I don't reckon you tabloid writers pay much attention to what you write, but I'd swear on my grandaddy's grave in the backyard that it's all true from the first night it started to this very night, and when I'm done telling my story I'll show you my Barnstormer myself."

That's how I started telling him the tale I'm about to tell you, so sit down and wrap your fingers around your coffee because it's bound to get cold. September nights can bring a chill, and the tale I'm about to tell is long and strange, but it's more strange than long.

It happened on a hot June night back in sixty-nine. You probably weren't even born yet. I got fifty acres out here that's been in my family for five generations. And I was bringing Betsy and the other cows home from grazing around suppertime when I saw some strange lights in the sky. It was one of them flying saucers, you know, a u.f.o. I know you think I'm crazy. I thought I was getting crazy myself, being out in the heat all day. I was shocked more than scared, and I wasn't having an easy time with it at all.

That flying saucer--well it looked more like an upside down bowl--yeah, that flying saucer landed about fifty feet from here, about near them trees, and it was them trees that I took to hiding behind. That flying saucer landed, and a door opened up, and them things started walking down it one by one.

One of them things was my Barnstormer, and although I hated them things for what they did, I don't mind so much now. They was all dressed up in these shiny silver suits, just like the asternauts wear, but they didn't have any of them fish bowl looking helmets on. And as soon as them things started coming out my cows took to running like they got fleas all of a sudden. I had about twenty cows then compared to the two hundert I got now.

Boy, I was mad that night when they started doing what they were doing, but if it had to happen again I wouldn't have done a thing different except maybe take the whole crew alive instead of just my Barnstormer.

They were the weirdest creatures I ever did see, but then again they weren't so strange. Each of them, even my own Barnstormer, stood nearly ten foot tall. That's why he's in the barn. I couldn't fit him in the back bedroom. I try to make him as comfortable as possible in the barn.

They all stood on their own hind legs, but they was all bulls, male cows I tell you, with hooves and horns and rings in their noses. Reminded me of them stories I'd heard in the fourth grade when I was fifteen, about the legend of the Manator, and that prob'ly ain't no legend after all you know.

As soon as they got off that ramp they all started shooting these big guns at my cows. I'm guessing now that they were trankilling guns, you know the kind that put you to sleep, but not forever. They started shooting at my cows, and my cows was falling one after 'nother. They must've got about eight of my cows that night. You remember them stories about cownapping, not sleeping cows, but cows that were found mooty lated, you know, all cut up

about the same time that lights were seen in the sky. Well, I think it was these guys that did all the mooty lating or some of their friends. See, what I was thinking was that these guys were looking for mates. You know we all do that sometimes, look for some gal whose generator ain't filled up all the way. All of us guys need that every now and then, more then than now though for me.

I stood there in shock at all that was going on until they started taking the cows onto their flying ship. Taking my cows. It made me mad as hell, and I let loose with my gun and scared them things more than anything. They all began a running, but they couldn't run too fast on 'count they had short legs.

And I corralled all of them back into their spaceship shooting at them, but they still got a few of my cows, so I kept shooting at the door that had closed up and wanting my cows back. And the saucer started humming and then just took off.

That's when I turned around and there was one of them still left. He dropped his trankilling gun and the cow he was carrying 'cross his shoulders, and that dang blasted thing started charging at me, but I fired into the air, and it must've scared him because he started running the other direction away from me.

I started to chase that thing, seeing as how they couldn't run too fast, but I was sure to grab that trankilling gun of his. Luckily, the monster didn't get off my property or I think it wouldn't belonged to the government. I had a fence five foot tall and a killer of a cattle guard on the only road off my property. So I wasn't too afraid of the short-legged critter getting away from me.

I aimed his trankilling gun right at his own hiney rump, and I pulled the trigger, and my Barnstormer fell to the ground sounding like a big tree. It took me six of my horses to pull that sonuvabitch into the barn. He must've weight a ton and it was a job and a half chaining him up in my barn. The rafters and supports were tough. Hell, they lasted since they was built in the eighteen hunerts, but there was some holes I had to patch up so nobody could sneak a peek. It took me till dawn to tie that big critter up, and I used every piece of rope and chain I had.

When he finally woke, he screamed, and I thought there was a storm falling down, that's why I calls him my Barnstormer, like I already said. A few days later I found my best cow Betsy in the barn. She must've nudged the barn door open with her muzzle, but I didn't think nothing of it till she began swelling up fast with a calf, but she was bigger than she should've been, and when that calf was born I understood why she was so big, because that calf was big, and it grew to be a good six foot from hoof to ear. I called her Betsy Jr. seeing as how it killed Betsy when it came out of her.

The thing is, after Betsy Jr. gave birth to Betsy the third, I call her Trey, I started milking Betsy Jr. even though I was a bit wary about it. Didn't have any idea what'd come out of that thing, but the milk she gave me was the sweetest milk I ever did have. I figured I'd have to sacrifice a few of my cows, but I went ahead and let my Barnstormer mate with a few more cows, and in a few months I had four cows giving me that sweet milk, even though they had all killed their mommas, but that was worth the sacrifice, especially considering that eventually I'd be selling some of these Barnstormer's cows for meat and such.

That's probably why everybody found out because of the sweet milk I been selling to the locals and the beef, although I was afraid to taste it for myself, I been told it's almost sweet also. And ever since then I been mating all my cows with that Barnstormer, and that's why I say I wouldn't have done a thing different at all except take the rest of them Barnstormers alive.

Yeah, Officer, that's the same story I told that newspaper guy, and afterwards he asks to see my Barnstormer. So I take him over to the barn and open it for him. He just looks at the Barnstormer, and it's huffing and puffing ten feet high. And then the reporter asked me, you know what he asked me, Officer, he asked me what I fed the thing. I couldn't stop laughing. I was laughing as much as I reckon I am now, and then I pushed the kid into the barn and locked him in. I was still laughing when I heard him scream because I was going to get so much money from my sweet milk and my sweet beef, and it was a great way to get rid of all them pesky reporters. I figured the world could do without all them damn reporters anyhow, and besides that, I needed to feed my Barnstormer. Say, Officer, would you like to see my Barnstormer?

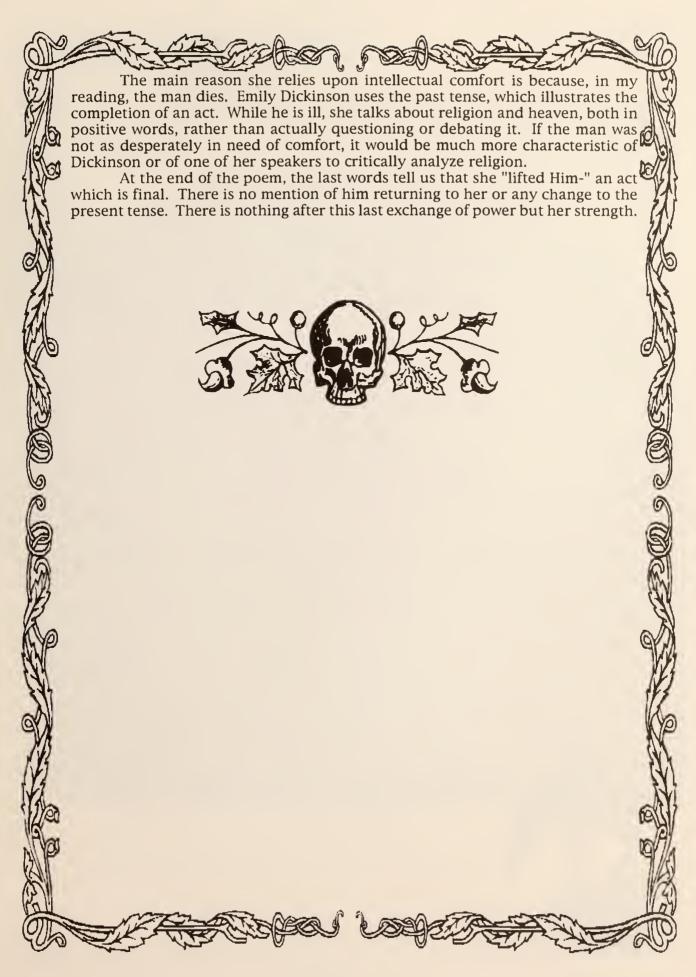


erratic form, quick pace, and abstract metaphors describe the transformation of the nurturer rather than the nurtured. Because of the role as a spiritual caretaker, the speaker is probably a young woman who previously acted the role of a child. Cast in this traditionally nurturing and feminine role, she matures while she offers spiritual as well as physical comfort. The "He" in the poem carries some degree of societal power but, as the speaker discovers in the poem, the roles have reversed due to his illness. Ironically, the first and last stanzas are the only ones in which "He" and "Him" are capitalized. This deliberate capitalization highlights his original power. In the rest of the poem, the focus remains on the speaker. Although the speaker cares for him, she reacts incredulously to her newfound sense of power. She begins with "I rose- because He sank-" and is certain her strengths would have remained hidden without the role reversal. With the attention primarily on the speaker, the sick man's role becomes almost incidental. Paradoxically, with the failure of his physical strength, her intellectual and spiritual strength increase. In the second stanza, she offers him both intellectual and spiritual comfort, offering "Chants" and "Hymn," which also works as a possible allusion to her hymn to him-- this poem but with little musicality. Another possibility is that this poem is instead a chant, which further emphasizes the non-Puritan religious sense. The third stanza points to the untimely death of the sick man. It begins with an allusion to the cold sweat on his face from his illness. the speaker nurses him and confronts his cold sweat with the sweat caused by her own labors. The fourth stanza discusses his impending death because she comforts him by explaining that everyone must die. Dickinson uses recoverable deletion in "I told him Best- must pass/ Through this low Arch of Flesh." The poem reads best "I told him [that even the] Best [souls or people]- must pass/ through this low Arch of Flesh [known as the body]." Lines 14 and 15 use nonrecoverable deletion in "Casque" although "spurn" is left in a plural form whereas there is only one Casque mentioned. One possible conclusion for this change in grammar is that, without

the extra "s" in spurns, there remains just one "s" sound on each of these two lines, thus maintaining a Dickinsonian type of order.

Religion is brought up again into the fifth stanza when the speaker talks of "Worlds I knew/ Where Emperors grew/ And recollected us if we were true." Interestingly, she pluralizes "Emperors." Once again, she offers intellectual comfort by describing places and people which may represent Heaven and Gods, respectively. The speaker's strength peaks in the final stanza as her religious belief and self-confidence grows. "I lifted Him-" suggests the strength to give his soul to Heaven, marking the end of his journey on earth. This last line culminates in the last surge of power she receives as the resignation to his death becomes final.

For instance, the poem uses predominantly rational language, built upon words given in matter-of-fact tones. She softens the poem with "s," "m," and "n," sounds but it is careful to maintain the strength of short lines and cold facts. In the final version of the poem, Dickinson opted for "firm- even- Chants" rather than "straight- steady- Chants-." By choosing these words, Dickinson uses syntactic doubling because "even" has two meanings. "Even" could mean steady, as her possible replacement list suggests, or it could emphasize "Chants." Not only does the speaker offer intellectual comfort rather than emotional or physical aid, but she also relies on head-related adjectives which further imply mental relief. She uses the words "Film," "Forehead," and "Casque" and she vocalizes her comfort by singing, talking, and cheering.



The Burial Tree by Randy Price

An icy, bitter, January wind howls over the mountains, and sweeps down into the valley, bringing death to all it touches. Only the Indian burial mound stands alive; a small island amidst an ocean of snow, fully lush and vibrant with green life. Fresh grasses cover the small hill; and, in the center stands the old tree. An ancient emblem of wisdom, it is itself a contradiction to the vegetation that surrounds it. It seems dead as it looms, crooked and leafless. Its skin is old and wrinkled, resembling that of an ash-gray alligator; hardened by time and the harsh winds of Winter. The thick girth of the trunk is gnarled into faces that seem to strain to escape from within -- faces of animals and men stare blindly ahead, their eyes bulging wide with horror, their mouths agape in voiceless screams.

Cursed boughs grope upward; twisted, sharp branches arc in praise of the Moon, and of her enlightening madness. The branches end in cruel, wooden talons, their tips stained crimson. Once again the chill of the night blows through the fingers of the tree, and the ominous beating of drums echoes through the evening air.

A circle of rosebushes grows at the base of the tree's trunk; their white flowers bloom from sickly green stems. Hunger has brought a small rabbit from the safety of its burrow to the sweet grass of the hill. The tiny bundle of fur skittles from one patch of grass to another. Now and then, it halfway stands up on its hind legs, long velvet ears perked and attentive to the slightest noise. It hastily munches the green blades as a breeze stirs its soft, brown fur and the gentle white down of its cute, powder-puff tail.

After some time, it moves toward the tantalizing leaves of the rosebushes; and, all at once, the long branches of the tree bend to the ground, reaching with horrific speed for the bunny! Paralyzed, the rabbit can only stare up just as the evil talons spear through its soft body, and drag it into the salivating orifice that has just opened at the base of the tree; apparently a mere juncture of two roots only a second ago.

Blood spatters the grass, and the doomed visage of a young rabbit is added to

the trunk's grisly gallery.

All the chaos ends as quickly as it started. The branches and their crimson fingertips lazily resume their former position, as the toothy orifice closes contentedly and the two, smiling, fat lips merge together again.

An eerie calm surrounds the hill, and the chill howl of January stirs the rosebushes while their flowers blush from a white pallor to livid red. Once again, the dull beating of drums echoes through the evening air, as the chanting of savage voices seeps from the earth.



What kind of monster says good-bye

Now! Now! Cry!

And doesn't cry?

A Poem Called Goodnight by Tiffany Vicknair

For the air shall ignite, with fire and dust.
For the night shall drift, with the souls around us.
For the dead shall come to life, when the sole one comes forth, on the day that shall be melted.

For the parental figures shall be beaten, with bloodshed though the night.
For the restless souls shall rise again, and keep this world how it should've been. On this dark night, where the wind grows restless, the old world shall burn, where the new bursts with life. And this shall be the day, when the souls shall rise.

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. This is what, shall become of us. Steam shall rise, smoke around us, to the day we call doom. . . .



Night Sermon by Phaedra Kelly

The wind blows my thoughts out the window and into the open street. The moonshine is bright. and overhead lamp posts flicker and sputter like roman candles. I hear laughter from the upstairs flat--a joke or a promise, a night of burlesque or a last gasp of mirth in the face of despair. But the streets are deathly silent, littered with the living bodies of men and women seeking shelter in refrigerator boxes on storefront stoops. waiting for a god to come and save them. Instead, an ancient beggar, grungy and disheveled, staggers down out street, waving am empty bottle of malt liquor at the oblivious moon. Our prophet howls out his gospel for all our doomed souls to hear:

"Come forth from the Shadows, you wretched, you pathetic, you dismal few who still have faith in a faithless world. Come, let me preach to you The New Gospel. My message is DESPAIR. Weep, you fools, for the end of the world occurred and no one noticed.



"How's Life?"-original black and white photo by Cher M. Couvillion



The Eagle and the Rose by Kevin Neal

To the heights of heaven's door The eagle flies in everlasting search For the world it once knew

The land has lost its soul
And the land is no more
Stone and metal covers the ground

This is the prophesy of man
To take what is not his
And destroy what he can

This is hope in the winds of chance In the cracks of this dead world The seed of life remains deathly still

As the lifeless rain falls upon the ground
The soil drinks it greedily
To make sure that it can breathe still

Day after day, the seeded child grows The land nourishes its child of hope And gives it strength to reach the sky

Once it breaks free from its bonds
The world of man bites it back
And the young flower is beatened down

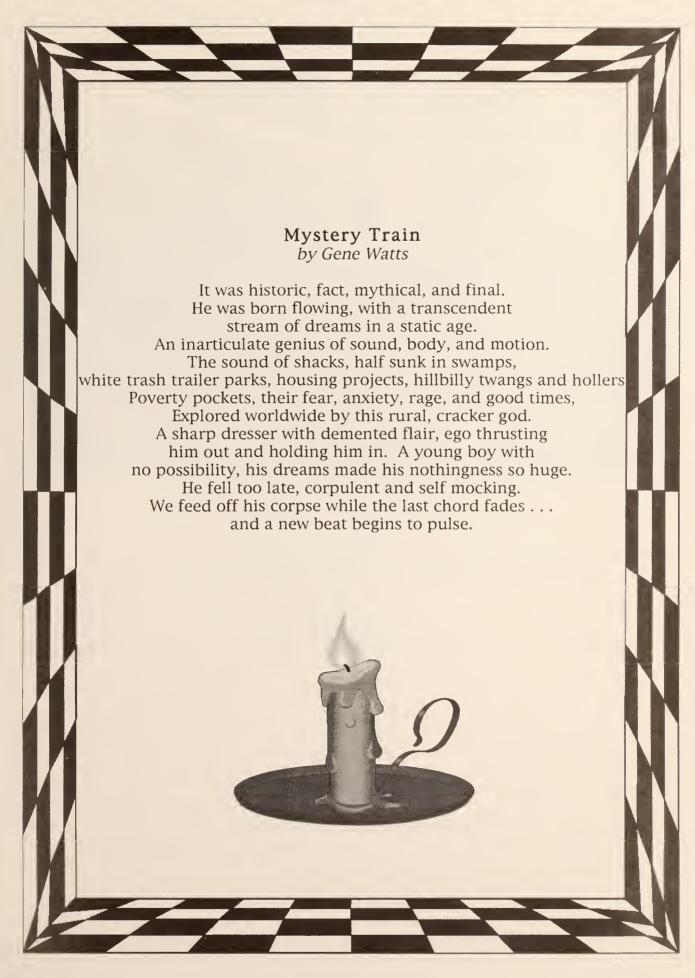
But nature has courage and patience And day after day the bud reaches up to see the smoke filled sky

And as the days come to pass
The flora child begins to bloom
To announce to the world the birth of a life

But only the eagle in heaven does notice It is as it should be Only those of nature do truly see

When the world is too blind to see the struggle of life and death That belongs in the budding of a rose





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An Ode to a Snowflake
by AR-KANSAS

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SPLAT!

CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES



"The Contributing Crew" - photo by Jeff Fletcher

David Alford, Jr. is a second-semester sophomore who is majoring in advertising design and seeking an associate's degree in business. He and his wife, Teresa, are expecting their first baby sometime in early May.

Ar-Kansas doesn't know that his poem is being published.

Courtney Bailey is a theatre major who enjoys nature and expression through art.

Debra Bailey is an English graduate student who loves the ocean, birds, creative writing classes, and words.

Carol Bernard likes weird haircuts, and is an English graduate student who's furiously working to get through this year!

Garry S. Billiot is a psychology major with an emphasis in Criminology. He loves to read and collect books. He also collects business cards. He has a black widow spider, Lygia, who just *loves* mice and kittens.

Carolyn Breedlove has a bachelor's degree in French and English, is married with two children; and is currently working on her CRM degree.

Bonnye R. Busbice is a Louisiana Scholars' College junior whose current life revolves around Dickinson and La. chocolate sin bars.

Cher M. Couvillion is graduating. We are still wondering how she managed to put her camera *inside* a grave in order to shoot her photograph, "How's Life?" (or did she?...).

Rae N. Cupples is a graduate student who is now living in Monroe.

dk is modest.

Susan E. Dollar is a part-time graduate student and adjunct English/French teacher.

John Doughty, Jr. is a non-traditional student who hopes to become a professional writer *very* soon. He has won first place in ARGUS' fiction category for the past three semesters!

C. Michael Edwards is an astronomer.

Patty Fenton is an English major from Marthaville.

Jeff Fletcher is graduating in psychology. He is a photographer for <u>The Current Sauce</u> and <u>The Potpourri</u>. He is also a member of the NSU track team.

Marcy Frantom is a graduate student in the folk lore track. She has been writing since she was a little girl; and usually writes narrative poems and stories about death. In addition to the ARGUS, she has also been published in <u>Southern Review</u> and <u>Carolina Quarterly</u>.

Clara Gerl may have no perception, but she's not stupid!

Robert P. Greer is an English graduate student whose interests include science fiction, popular culture, and literary criticism. His thesis explores the Tarzan and Mars novels of Edgar Rice Burroughs.

Angel Guidroz says, "You should never talk with your mouth full--it's not pretty."

Julia Hebert loves variety (especially in her hair color). She aspires to become a professional fashion designer. She truly admires Death, the Sandman's sister.

Michael Hunt desperately needs a shave.

Mark Kapera is graduating. He believes in self-peace and world expression.

Phaedra Kelly is an English graduate student who says, "Censorship is anothema to the questioning spirit; it is a cancer in the marrow of democracy."

John Kleisler is a graduate assistant from New York. His concentration is in art with an emphasis in photography. He is also a flight instructor at NSU.

Angelica Kraushaar is a freshman at LSC. She and Clara Gerl create very interesting answering machine messages.

La S*GO Die is currently searching for a real name.

Frank Lewis is an accounting major from Fort Polk, La.

Susan Lewis is a graduate student studying in the writing and linguistics track. She is also the 1993-1994 Sigma Tau Delta treasurer, and a really sweet person.

M. Katherine Malinski is an LSC freshman who is on the NSU rowing team.

Glenn McMann is a psychology major who hates having his picture taken.

Hollie Moran has been published in several national poetry anthologies. She enjoys writing, singing, drawing, and acting.

Kevin Neal is a sophomore at the Louisiana Scholars' College who plans to become an artist of some renown-- hopefully before he dies.

Robert Nehlig is an "extended senior" at Scholars' College who is trying to escape.

Sarah E. New received her B.A. (1960) and M.A. (1965) in Fine Arts from LSU in Baton Rouge. She is returning to college to study English (and computers). She also plans to do some writing in the future.

Lisa Price is a brand new mother who is desperately trying to get some sleep. She loves to eat pasta (and very little else).

Randy Price is the father of Aurora Alexandra Price, the most beautiful baby in the known universe. He created the generic word, "Schwaaa," which is defined as "meaning everything and nothing."

Ronald M. Rachal is a graduate student in Student Personnel Services.

Laura Rose is a graduate assistant for Dr. Terry Isbell.

Peter Ryles is perpetually late (but always has a good reason).

Rob Show is a man trapped in a woman's body.

Ed Steele really misses Vincent Price.

Sunflower Tattoo is a feminist who hates green beans and Speedo bathing suits.

- **Stacey Leigh Taff** is a graduating graduate student with a concentration in literature and an emphasis in composition. She currently has no life, but she says that if she did, she "would like to read, watch movies, and eat junk food."
- Fred L. Taulbee, Jr. is a graduate student who is a movie enthusiast, and loves to eat shrimp for lunch.
- **Rene' Van Slate** is a graduate student with a really cool haircut who can't believe she tied with Fred for third place.
- Suzanna Vazquez has more pseudonyms than Trudy Chase has personalities. She loves disco and sunflowers.
- Tiffany Vicknair is a very outspoken, very outgoing English education major.
- Gene Watts is a poet looking for a good deal on a used car. His hobbies include: basketball, pornography, shoplifting, and solving the Jack the Ripper case.
- **Nathan Wood** has returned from Poland. He is a sophomore at the Scholars' College who utters a really entertaining exclamation (sounds like Homer Simpson) when frustrated. If you don't like his work, he'd look you in the eye and say, "To nie ma sparwy."









